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# THE CHRIST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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# THE CHRIST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

By Colin ~~and Maxwell~~ Carnson

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# AUTHORS' NOTE

We are entirely indebted, for the ideas and argument of Chapter XIV, to the Reverend E. H. H. Lee, M.A. (Christ's College, Cambridge), Vicar of Whitechurch Canonicorum with Marshwood, Stanton St. Gabriel and Fishpond. His study of the closing weeks of Christ's life, published by Skeffington & Son (1924) under the title of "The Plan of Caiaphas," has been one of our treasured possessions since its publication. To those who desire to follow out, more closely than we have had space for, the whole situation of the Betrayal, Trial and Death of Jesus, we cannot recommend too highly this valuable treatise.

We also desire to express grateful thanks to the Editor of The Study Bureau for permission to reproduce in Chapter X matter which we wrote for him many years ago.

C. & M. C.

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"THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; AND THAT BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME." (Jn. xx, 31).

"EVERY SCRIBE WHICH IS INSTRUCTED UNTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO A MAN THAT IS AN HOUSEHOLDER, WHICH BRINGETH FORTH OUT OF HIS TREASURE THINGS NEW AND OLD." (Matt. xiii, 52).

# THE CHRIST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

## CHAPTER ONE

### "THE CHRIST OF THE SCRIPTURES"

"UNTO us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the Government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His Government and peace there shall be no end, upon the Throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah ix, 6, 7).

"Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i, 30-33).

"This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours" (Luke xx, 14).

"We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke xix, 14).

"Pilate saith unto the Jews, 'Behold, your King.' But they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.' Pilate saith unto them, 'Shall I

crucify your King?' The Chief Priests answered, 'We have no King but Cæsar' " (John xix, 15).

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Hebrews xiii, 8).

"Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness and the First begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

"Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. And they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. i, 5-8).

"And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True ; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself.

"And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood ; and His name is called The Word of God.

"And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations ; and He shall rule

them with a rod of iron ; and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And He hath on his vesture and on His thigh a name written

'KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS'"
(Rev. xix, 11-16).

"Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev. xxii, 12, 13).

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.

"And the Spirit and the Bride say 'Come' ; and let him that heareth say 'Come' ; and let Him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of Life freely.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book : If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book.

"He which testifieth these things saith, 'SURELY I COME QUICKLY.' Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.

"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen" (Rev. xxii, 16-21).

## CHAPTER TWO

### "JESUS, THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH"

It has been a wonderful comfort to us who have to work for our living to feel that in the Jesus of the Gospels we have One who comes down to us on the ordinary levels of everyday life and labour. The "horny-handed son of toil" delights to feel that Jesus Himself laboured with His hands in the making of chairs and tables at Nazareth ; that He earned a precarious livelihood in the carpenter's shop of the village, keeping the cottage home together for Mary His mother, and for those later children of the family whom we speak of as His "brethren."

What wonderful lessons He must have taught—and learned, some will say—in that open shed, beside the bench, with the clean smell of the shavings, the whistle of the plane across the wood, or the steady buzz of the saw. And how wonderful it would have been for us to-day if it had been possible to preserve until this time tables and chairs, benches and stools, made by the very hands of Jesus.

How the villagers of Nazareth must have gathered round and listened to Him, and questioned Him, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth, as He laboured and loved and sorrowed and rejoiced during those eighteen years of preparation for His ministry. It must have been a hallowed spot, indeed, that little shop ; "a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Knowing village life as we do to-day, and especially

Oriental village life, with the blacksmith's shop as the centre of the village gossip, or the little store where the women foregather, or the opportunities afforded by the weekly buying and selling in the market, we cannot but feel that Jesus must have been the centre of all that was best and brightest in the village life of Nazareth; and that as He fashioned simple furniture for the material needs of men He was fashioning also simple ideals of peace and love and patience and good temper in the hearts of all who came to Him. We have, it is true, no record that He did; but the Jesus whom we know and love could have done no other in such circumstance; else He would not be "our" Jesus.

S. D. Gordon, in his "Quiet Talks about Jesus" (page 151), has one of his characteristically beautiful passages which illustrates our estimate of the "Carpenter of Nazareth." He writes:

"I have tried to think of Him coming into young manhood in that Nazareth home. He is twenty now, with a daily round something like this: up at dawn, likely—He was ever an early riser—chores about the place; the cow, maybe, and the kindling and fuel for the day; helping to care for the younger children; then off down the narrow street, with a cheery word to passers-by, to the little low-ceilinged carpenter's shop, for—eight hours?—more likely ten or twelve.

"Then back in the twilight; chores again, the evening meal, helping the children of the home in difficulties that have arisen to fill their day's small horizon; a bit of quiet talk with his mother about family matters; then, likely, off to the hilltop to look out at the stars and talk with the Father; then back again, slipping quietly into the bedroom, sharing

sleeping space in the bed with a brother. And then the sweet rest of a labouring man until the grey dawn broke again.

"And that not for one day—every day, a year of days, *years*. He's twenty-five now, feeling the thews of his strength ; twenty-seven, twenty-nine, still the old daily round. . ."

Such is the picture Mr. Gordon paints ; and so the labouring man has loved this Jesus. He feels he can share with Him, understand Him, approach Him ; and every picture painted of the "human Jesus" has its special appeal to the hearts of human men. He comes thus into our hymns, our prayers, our sermons ; books innumerable have been written on this aspect of His life ; and our literature and the quality of our Christianity owe not a little to this interpretation.

Perhaps Arthur Pierce Vaughan's poem, quoted also by S. D. Gordon, will best illustrate the general attitude:

"In the shop of Nazareth pungent cedar haunts the breath.
'Tis a low Eastern room, windowless, touched with gloom.
Workman's bench and simple tools line the walls. Chests and stools,
Yoke of ox and shaft of plough, finished by the Carpenter,
Lie about the pavement now.
In the room the Craftsman stands, stands and reaches out His hands.
Let the shadows veil His face if you must, and dimly trace

His workman's tunic, girt with bands at His waist. But His *hands*—
Let the light play on them ; marks of toil lay on them.
Paint with passion and with care, every old scar showing there
Where a tool slipped and hurt ; show each callous ; be alert
For each deep line of toil. Show the soil
Of the pitch ; and the strength grip of helve gives at length.

When night comes and I turn from my shop where I earn
Daily bread, let me see those hard hands ; know that He
Shared my lot, every bit ; was a man, every whit.
Could I fear such a hand stretched toward me ? Misunderstand
Or mistrust ? Doubt that He meets me in full sympathy ?

Carpenter, hard like Thine is this hand,—this of mine ;
I reach out, gripping Thee, Son of Man, close to me,
Close and fast, fearlessly."

It is along the lines of this aspect of Jesus that the great Brotherhood movement has been built up ; and to a very large extent the wonderful development of the Trades Union movement owes its primary inspiration here. One has even heard an enthusiastic minister of the Gospel declare that "If Jesus were here to-day, He would be a Trades Union leader."

"The Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God" has been the motto of the Brotherhood movement, the banner of the "man-in-the-street," whose only conception of religion to-day seems to be "I never do no harm to nobody." The "dignity of labour" was the earliest cry of the down-trodden "hands" of a generation ago, under which they rightly ceased to be "hands" and became "men"; personalities, not mechanisms. And this was all to the good, for it needed emphasising; though it has been so emphasised since those early days, that the "dignity of labour" has become the "dignity of ca' canny," and the hard-won liberty has been exchanged for an easily-claimed license.

Thus arose, in orderly and gentle sequence, the modern emphasis on "the dignity of the human personality"; the growth of the study of mental processes; the development of soul culture in the forms of "New Thought," "Practical Psychology," "Christian Theosophy," and other schools of thought. The emphasis on the humanity of Jesus, which was necessary and beneficial in its time, has swung over to an undue emphasis on the divinity of humanity; self-cultivation has usurped the place of salvation; and Jesus, the great exemplar, has displaced Christ the Crucified.

In the realm of labour, it is still true that Jesus is the great ideal of the working classes: He has brought a genial good-fellowship, a camaraderie, a "hail-fellow-well-met"-ness which is congenial, and easy, and—costs nothing. It certainly has not led to *worship*, or to *reverence*, or even to church-going. What proportion of the members of the Brotherhood movement, for example, take their fair share in the

responsibilities and burden of organised church work ? How many Trades Union delegates bow the knee to Christ ?

As a practical experiment, take the great cry of modern humanity, "The Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God." Add to it a third element, "The Kingship and Rule of Jesus Christ," and what is the result ? No Trades Union leader dare do it ; modern movements will not emphasise it ; it has been definitely turned down by the great social movements among men, the semi-secret societies, who will put anyone or anything else at the head of their organisations, but *not Christ.*

Even, be it admitted with shame, in many modern churches, and in the minds of many modern clergymen, the claim that Jesus must be the supreme authority seems to militate against the "dignity of human personality," and consequently must go. Only recently a minister of one of the Free Churches was heard to state in so many words, "I do not care what the Bible says ; if it makes claims that impinge upon the dignity of the human personality, then I cannot accept those claims." We are also told, on the highest authorities in our pulpits, "Jesus was the product of his age and generation. He thought and spoke in terms suited to his day." Presumably, in these modern days, He would have a different message and a new Gospel.

The logical ultimate conclusion of this emphasis on the human Jesus is that He takes His place in the history of the world as One of the Great Teachers of mankind, an ideal to which we must all strive to attain, or a friend and companion with whom we can be on familiar terms of good-fellowship. We can wor-

ship as easily, we are told, in the green fields as in the church, perhaps more easily ; we can, presumably, talk with Christ in the club bar, in the billiard saloon, in the workshop ; we CAN—but we don't ; and we cease to recognise any authority He may claim over our lives or actions.

We admire His teachings and His personality immensely ; He is certainly one of the greatest "Initiates" the world has ever known ; not even on the Himalayas have the "great ones" surpassed Him, if they have equalled Him.

Yet He is ours ; He shares our life ; He has toiled as we toil ; we are His friends, His comrades, some day perhaps to be His equals. "We are all Christs."

Thus from humanism we go on to self-culture ; from self-culture to esoteric mysticism. We raise ourselves to the utmost of human possibilities by lifting the heels of our own shoes ; we "conquer evil by thinking good" ; we find the way of culture to be the path of salvation. Man has not fallen ; he is simply always on the up-grade of the long process of evolution ; and we may reach heights of spiritual delight and achievement in gazing upon white lilies or in meditating in mystic silence within our own soul.

Now this is all very nice and helpful ; it rests and has brought comfort to many weak souls,—but it is not Christianity. As an interpretation it is delightful, but it is not Scriptural. "To the Law and to the Testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah viii, 20).

The whole conception of Jesus as the Carpenter of Nazareth, helpful though it has been, has no foundation in Scripture other than the one word in Mark vi,

3. "Is not this the Carpenter, the son of Mary?" And even then, the exactly parallel passage in Matt. xiii, 55, reads "Is not this the carpenter's *son*?" From the point of view, then, of what the Scriptures *actually say*, we have rather a slender thread of evidence on which to hang so widely emphasised an interpretation.

Knowing as we do how Jesus always drew illustrations from the common circumstances of the people's life, how He applied His Gospel from what He knew of nature, the farmer, the fisherman, the market place, it strikes us as surprising that, if He really spent all those years as a carpenter and knew the details of that trade, not a single one of His illustrations should be taken from that source. There was such a wide field there for driving home His points in His own inimitable manner, and one feels that He could hardly have escaped doing so if His years from twelve to thirty had been thus occupied. But of all these years we have no hint whatever in His teaching or in His thought. One reason for this silence we may suggest at a later stage; at the moment it is sufficient merely to make a note of it.

Further, the Scriptures themselves suggest that Jesus was not well-known in Nazareth and among His own people, at least not with that intimacy which the occupation of village carpenter would have provided. Psychologically speaking, can we imagine a people who had known Him for years in the life of the village, who had listened to His quiet talk at the bench and had caught something of His spirit of greatness and of love, expressing themselves as Matthew and Mark say they did? Here are the passages in question:

Matt. xiii, 54-56, "And when He was come into His

own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, 'Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works ? Is not this the carpenter's son ? Is not his mother called Mary ? And his brethren, James and Joses and Simon and Judas ? And his sisters, are they not all with us ? Whence then hath this man all these things ?' "

Mark vi, 2, 3, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and of Juda and Simon ? And are not his sisters here with us ?"

All this suggests that, while the family with which He was associated was well-known and accepted, Jesus came upon the scene as something of an unknown quantity, with a teaching to which they were not accustomed, an authority they did not recognise. This could hardly have been the case if He had been their carpenter for eighteen years.

Again, John tells us, in connection with the great discourse in chapter 6 concerning the "Bread of Heaven," that those who heard Jesus said : "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? How doth He now say, 'I am come down out of Heaven ?' "

Would it not have seemed more natural for them, and more forceful to their argument, to have said—if they could with truth have said it, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary ? Have we not known Him all His life, at the carpenter's bench, in the village, and in the home ? How doth He now say : 'I am come down from Heaven ?' "

However much we may value the human Jesus, one cannot help feeling that too much emphasis has been

laid on that side of His nature without Scriptural evidence; a side of truth which the great enemy of Christ likes to have emphasised, since it distracts attention from His real place in history and in the purposes of God. Nor can we doubt that those who have succumbed to the glamour of the beautiful pictures which have been so artistically painted have thereby helped to perpetuate a conception of Jesus which does not fulfil the requirements of the case, and has led to much of the present-day slackness with regard to our attitude to Him and to His Church.

For there can be little question but that the world to-day needs DISCIPLINE more than anything else; it needs a Master and a Saviour, more even than a Companion, a Fellow-labourer and a Friend. And this, which we all so sorely need, Saving and Mastering, is just the conception of the Person of Christ which the Scriptures give us when read as a whole. Refer back to the first chapter in this book, and read again the picture of Jesus as there given in the language of the Word of God. Is there not intense need to-day for such a personality and power in the life of the world as we know it?

The innumerable gatherings of men, in Brotherhoods, Y.M.C.A's, Social Clubs, Trades Unions, Secret Societies, and "Orders" of various kinds, in workshops, factories, and in the streets, need a Leader, a Governor, a King. At present they are largely resenting thoughts of law and order and governance; they aim at self-determination, self-gratification, and self-advancement, whereas what they really need is salvation from sin, and surrender to authority. There can be no salvation from sin, there can be no authority to which it is safe to submit,

other than that which is in Christ Jesus. "There is none other Name given under Heaven whereby we can be saved"; and it is not the Carpenter of Nazareth, but the Saviour of the World, the Son of God, who gives us what we need.

The varied societies for self-culture, the different arisings of the religious spirit, need the same discipline, the same authority, the same Saviour. "New Thought," "Theosophy," "Spiritualism," "Christian Science," and the various ethical and psychological societies, all have their exalted philosophies, their real substratum of truth. But their thinking is undisciplined, because their attitude is one of revolt against authority. Again it is self-determination, self-immolation, self-realisation. Apply the touchstone of discipline to these systems; claim them for Jesus Christ in the phrase "Lord, to whom shall we go? THOU hast the words of Eternal Life"; remind them that "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me"; and at once their true character is revealed, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Nothing but the Power of Christ, the Authority of Christ, the Salvation of Christ, the Divine Kingship of Christ can bring order out of the weltering chaos of warring human factions. In the breakdown of human efforts at Government, in the social chaos of to-day, for the solution of industrial problems, for the satisfactory settlement of international affairs, a "Mussolini of the Nations" is needed. Where else but in Jesus Christ shall we find such an one? For it must be a Mussolini without the human faults, without the limited vision, without His being "the product of His age." In all these affairs we need a Ruler who shall have an age-long knowledge, a first-hand under-

standing of the everlasting purposes of God, and the power to rule. Only a Divine King can do it, and only a Divine King is promised us in His Word. That the Divine King should for a time have appeared in human form, with His own self-imposed limitations of that humanity, must not blind us to the fact of the eternal reality which is behind. Human or not, carpenter or not, He is always the Divine King ; and unless we receive Him as such, recognise Him as such, and surrender to Him as such, we are no more than rebels within His kingdom, refusing His authority over our affairs, our hearts and our souls.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God ; Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God ; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God ; and this is that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world" (I John iv, 1-3).

# CHAPTER THREE

## "THE EMASCULATED CONCEPTION OF CHRIST"

### (A) LOVE

MUCH feeling is aroused, even in church circles, if it is suggested, as we have done in the last chapter, that too much is made of the Humanity of Jesus.

The "modern mind," so self-styled and self-applauded, sees Jesus more as a product of His age and generation than in His cosmic importance as that is revealed through the Scriptures. This arises very largely through the separation of the Old Testament from the New; whereby we are asked to believe that the Old Testament is merely a record of "Jewish" happenings and ideals which the New Testament has not only superseded but has also, to all intents and purposes, put "out of court."

This feeling is expressed in very clear terms in the statement frequently made by the clergy of our modern churches, "We live in New Testament times"; or in the statement quite innocently made by a teacher of theology in one of our university colleges, "I know nothing about the Old Testament; I am a lecturer in New Testament subjects."

The fallacy revealed in this method of thought will be dealt with at greater length later; our present purpose is to show how it affects the presentation of the Personality of Jesus.

One of the more popular of our up-to-date bishops has more than once declared that he has no use for the Old Testament conception of the Deity. "God," he

says, "is revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, too often, as a 'bloodthirsty tribal deity,' the very antithesis of the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' " Following out the specious arguments of universal evolution, we are asked to believe that the revelation of God to man began in an early primitive form of very elementary conceptions, and gradually *evolved* until it reached the highest point in the New Testament statement that "God is Love."

The proving that this point of view does not do justice to all the facts of the case would take us too far from our present subject, involving, as it would, the revelation of gross ignorance of the intent and content of Holy Scripture on the part of those who are supposed to be the scholarly leaders of thought of our time. At the same time, we have to deal with the idea involved in the phrase "God is Love," and to see something of what that means as it is revealed to us in the New Testament.

The conception of love which is most often given to us is that which is best expressed in terms of the children's hymn, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild" ; a conception which has gone far to rob the character of Jesus of much of its moral force, and has undermined many of the eternal verities of the Christian revelation.

There are various expressions, which are current to-day, which will well illustrate the attitude of mind to which we are now referring.

"The idea that God will punish men eternally for their sins is contrary to our conception of Divine Love."

"That God cannot forgive unless there is first the

sacrifice of His own Son upon the Cross runs counter to our moral instincts."

"The belief that war can ever be justified is in direct opposition to the whole spirit of the New Testament."

"Christians must not be led into argument. We stand for harmony; aggression and controversy are not in the spirit of Christianity."

These, and many other, statements of our modern leaders reduce the moral sanctities of God to the level of the "prejudices of an irritated and non-moral Deity." The Holiness of God ceases to have any power of opposition against the onslaughts of evil. Jesus Christ, as the Representative of that Divine Holiness becomes a "sentimental idealist," a "dreamer of impossible attitudes," without stamina or background, without a hope of practical application to our daily life, and without any appeal to the outspoken, forthright mentalities of our generation.

Someone has rightly said, "To say that God is Love does not mean that He is the dispenser of promiscuous caresses." There is a very serious tendency to forget that there is, in the revelation of God, a "Holiness" which burns with wrath against sin; which will stop at no length to destroy sin; which considers itself bound to go "even to death, yea, the death of the Cross" in fighting against sin; which can be neither silent, complacent, nor yielding, in its attitude to those who serve the Devil.

War between God and the Devil is as clearly revealed in the New Testament as in the Old. There is nothing of the "mild pacifist" about Jesus in His dealings with sin or with the sinner. His claim is made

without apology, without hesitation, without wavering, for a complete break with sin and a complete surrender of the sinner to Himself. Not, be it noted, "surrender" to any other; not to any "church," or system of thought; to no human agency or means of help; but to Himself, and Himself alone.

While quite realising that little is achieved by arranging masses of Scripture either for or against any given point of view, one cannot help wondering how the sentimental interpreters of "Love" as it is revealed in God and in Jesus Christ can square the following statements with their emasculated conception...

"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire... He that cometh after me is mightier than I ... whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor.... He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (John the Baptist in Matt. iii, 7-12).

"If the salt have lost his savour ... it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out" (Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. v, 13).

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil ... one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled" (Jesus, Matt. v, 17, 18).

"Whosoever shall say 'Thou Fool' shall be in danger of Gehenna" (Jesus, Matt. v, 22).

"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; for it is profitable that one of thy members should perish and

not that thy whole body should be cast into Gehenna" (Jesus, Matt. v, 29, 30).

"If ye forgive not . . . neither will your Father forgive . . ." (Jesus, Matt. vi, 15).

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Jesus, Matt. vii, 19. See John's statement above).

"The children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Jesus, Matt. viii, 12).

"It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" (Jesus, Matt. x, 15).

"Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven" (Jesus, Matt. x, 33).

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace, but a sword ; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, the daughter against her mother. . ." (Jesus, Matt. x, 34, 35).

"Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Jesus, Matt. xii, 32).

"O generation of vipers. . ." (Jesus, Matt. xii, 34. See John's phrase above).

"An evil and adulterous generation . . . " (Jesus, Matt. xii 39).

"The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast

them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Jesus, Matt. xiii, 42, 50).

"Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an offence unto me" (Jesus to Peter, Matt. xvi, 23).

"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Jesus, Matt. xviii, 6).

"And his lord was wroth with him and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not . . . " (Jesus Matt. xviii, 35).

"My house shall be called the House of Prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. xxi, 13).

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites . . . " (Jesus, Matt. xxiii, 13-36).

These are taken from a cursory reading of the first Gospel only. Is there need to continue ? For the picture given in the other Gospels is by no means different ; nor have we done more, except in quoting one phrase of John the Baptist, than relate the exact words of Jesus as put into His mouth by the Evangelist. We have made no reference to the teaching of what Dr. W. M. Clow calls "The Dark Line in the Face of God," as it is portrayed in the Epistles of Paul, in Hebrews and in Revelation. We refer the reader once more especially to the description of Jesus in our first chapter, especially the quotations from Rev. i, 5-8 ; xix, 11-16 ; xxii, 16-21.

What does it all mean ?

Admittedly, these statements have been specially selected from the Gospel story to show one side of the

character of Jesus Christ, and other passages have been as definitely left out. That, however, does not alter the fact that these passages *are* there, and they need explaining. They do not square with the conception of the "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," which is being nowadays too much emphasised.

There is evidently in the character of Jesus an element of stern relentless opposition to all sin, and even to the sinner when he persists in his sin. There is the sheer strength of determination to destroy sin at all costs, even the cost of the Cross. There is absolute out-spoken honesty of thought and of purpose, no bilking of the possibilities, no glossing over the facts, no evading the issues.

There is, too, as we know, that absolute tenderness and understanding, that long-suffering and mercifulness, which only the truly *strong* character can manifest.

There is, in a word, LOVE—as God understands it, and not as it is interpreted so often by weak-kneed and backboneless sentimentalists.

Love, as Jesus sees it—No, as Jesus IS it, for "God is Love," "Jesus is God," therefore, "Jesus is Love"—never hides the truth out of a mistaken sense of kindness, never glosses over the unpalatable, never lowers its flag. Love never "takes it easy," never counts the cost, never falters. Love counts no sacrifice too great to help his brother; Love—that is, Jesus—goes all the way, to death if need be, in conquest of sin.

There you have the Cross—"Holy-Love"; Holiness that is so pure that it can not look upon iniquity, cannot tolerate sin, and yet is so loving that it dies

for the sinner ; and Love that is so firm and true and absolute that it blazes with wrath against all that would hurt the loved one, and fights to the death for his salvation.

In this there is no weakness, no gentle yielding, no easy forgiveness; there is rugged strength, implacable determination, courageous out-giving. Here is no "promiscuous dispensing of caresses," but a calm, persistent, all-conquering Power and Person to whom I dare commit myself and KNOW that I am saved.

"Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John iv, 10).

Sin ? Yes, sin is there. Judgment ? Yes, judgment is there. Wrath ? Yes, wrath, too, is there. Salvation ? Yes, thank God, Salvation is there, first, last, and all the time. "How great Salvation, who can tell?"

Because . . .

LOVE is there ; because Christ is there ; because God is there.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii, 16).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### "THE EMASCULATED CONCEPTION OF CHRIST"

### (B) LIFE

CLOSELY following on the enfeebled and bloodless picture of the character of Jesus, which has been the result of an over-emphasis on His gentleness and meekness, comes a representation of Him which one cannot help feeling has been inspired by the Devil himself in order to distract attention from the essential vividness of Jesus.

If Jesus is to be the Leader of Men, the Inspirer of Ideals, the Saviour of Souls, the Ruler of Nations,—and we shall see in due course that it is on this latter ground that Satan fears Him most—then every idea of Him which detracts from His manhood, every thought which makes Him appeal *less* to red-blooded virile human beings, will be emphasised by the Arch-enemy. And this is exactly what we see has happened.

What is the traditional portrait of Jesus ? Call to mind all the pictures of Him which the imagination of our artists has placed before us, and you will have difficulty in recalling one which suggests utter manliness. The long, flowing robes of the East ; the calm, placid features ; the soft and gentle beard ; the passionless, unmarred face ; all leave in the mind a suggestion of a being that has no especial manliness, no appeal to the strong and virile characteristics of our race both male and female.

How often does one hear, among men of the world, the expression uttered in sheer approval of some

individual, "One thing about So-and-so ; he is a MAN!" as if virility were the chief virtue, as it is indeed the most appealing ? This is the case not only among men ; it is proverbially true of women, that the "manly man," the "He-man" of the popular novelist, the Napoleon or Mussolini of national affairs, has an appeal that is utterly missing in others.

Has any man or woman any admiration for the effeminate man ? Can we tolerate a male creature scented and powdered, corseted and coiffured ? A thousand times, NO ! It is the strong, the virile, the dominating personality who has the suffrage of us all, men and women alike.

We shall see as we proceed in our study that this essential virility is very marked in Jesus. We may also see how very absent it is in so many of the popular presentations of Him. It is a short step from the "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," to the inert, enervate, impersonal character of popular art and of a great deal of modern preaching.

Those who have seen the cinema film "I.N.R.I., a Prisoner's Story of the Cross," as it was presented recently on the screen, and, perhaps in a less degree, the famous Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau, will realise very forcefully how far this process of "emasculation" has gone, and may perhaps recognise also the root source from which so false an impression of Jesus has emanated.

In the picture, the person of Jesus is made to be dull, miserable, and lackadaisical in the extreme. He never makes a decisive gesture, never moves with determination, glides through the scenes like an unearthly wraith. The passivity of His face never manifests a human emotion ; He never smiles, never

frowns, never attracts, but rather repels. Even the little children, as they approach Him, do so with big, round, awe-struck eyes and hesitating footsteps, as if they were afraid He should smite them where they stood. There is none of the sheer joy of childhood, none of the glad welcome, none of the kindling eye, the warm embrace, the "lifting them up in His arms and blessing them." Instead, the whole personality therein displayed seems rather to bring a blight than a blessing, to silence all human instincts and reduce all with whom He came into contact into a dead level of monotony, of boredom and of despair.

All this, one cannot but feel, is a travesty of the character of the Jesus of the Gospels, from whom we gather an air of brightness and charm, of vigour and approachableness, that is quite missing from the film representation. Whether, in His earthly pilgrimage, men agreed with Him or not, it is undoubted that they all recognised the force of personality that was within Him, the quality of "Life," almost of *joie de vivre*, that was His.

One could regard this presentation of Jesus Christ with slighter concern, were it not unfortunately only too typical of much that passes for Christianity to-day; or perhaps it would be more correct to say, it is typical of the impression which modern church life gives to those outside its circles. The solemn formality and deadness of many church services; even the sombre black coats and specialised garb of the clergy (more especially that feminine, non-virile appearance of the long black cassock which is occasionally paraded in our streets); and the "north-easterly" atmosphere of a good many professing Christians, go far to alienate the outsider. An impression is abroad, rightly or

wrongly, that church-going people are "cramped," "narrow," kill-joy kind of folk ; that to be a Christian you must be as long-faced and miserable as you can. It seems to be generally felt that the clergyman carries with him a chill of repression which freezes the good-fellowship in your bones, and prevents you from being your natural self in habit or conversation. Nowhere perhaps was this more clear than during the war, where, in the officers' mess as in the sergeants', and in the canteens, the presence of the padre made a tremendous difference to the atmosphere.

There have always been exceptions, of course, and they will spring to your mind as you read ; but you will feel conscious of your own inner feeling that they ARE exceptions, and that such "good fellows" as you have occasionally met among the clergy are "white men" *in spite of*, and not because of, their profession. How often have you told yourself, "If only all the parsons were like this man, we should all want to go to church ?" Until that happy day dawns, you think, you yourself could never dream of identifying yourself with the Church of Jesus Christ, because you feel that in doing so you would have to give up all that makes life worth living. To so many of us, Christianity has been made to look like the mother in the story, who sent her servant out into the garden with the command, "Go and see what Johnny is doing—and tell him he mustn't."

The cry of the age is for "Life" ; all our urge and hustle of entertainment is merely the struggle to possess oneself of "Life" ; our keenness on sport ; the nightly pleasure prolonged to the early hours of the next day ; the lights, the music, the gaiety ; the revel, the car ride, the "pursuit" ; it is all "Life, life,

life." There are some of us who simply cannot sit still for half an hour ; to be shut in with our own thoughts is hopelessly boring ; we must be up and off and out as quickly and as "live"-ly as we can. "Life is short," and we must get as much out of it as possible ; "let us eat, drink, and be merry ; for to-morrow we die."

Into such radiant, hectic life you feel that Jesus would come as a "kill-joy," a blasting, chilling wind which would rob you of the warmth, the light and the gaiety. The church and what it stands for would be a brake on your speed which you do not want to see applied. Jesus has been so presented to your imagination, and the samples you have seen of His followers have been such dull specimens, that you feel you really couldn't take it on.

Now, you must not blame these people too much if they are hopelessly dull, "stuffy," and uninteresting. They have their picture of Jesus all wrong. They did not get it from the Bible ; they either made it up for themselves out of the waste products of their own mind, or else they took it over ready-made from that school of thought which was capable of producing the picture "I.N.R.I." And when you look at them, you want to sigh, as Swinburne did, "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean ; The world has grown grey with Thy breath."

This negative presentation of Jesus Christ is of course quite contrary to the impression given us by the story in the Gospels. There is there a feeling of intense vitality, of urgency, of good humour, and of real joy. There is a breadth and sweep in the illustrations which Jesus uses, a "tang" and *kick* in His remarks, a constant ripple of a sense of humour in His attitude, which is often lamentably lacking in His

followers. He has, moreover, a positive assurance about this very question of "Life" which is exactly what we are all looking for. Listen to what He says.

First of all, with regard to eating, drinking and clothes, all the material things which concern us so much, He declares, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But rather, seek ye the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be *added* unto you. Fear not, little flock; your Father is *delighted* to give you the Kingdom."

Secondly, with regard to what we call "Life," hear His own words.

"I am the way, the truth and the life" (John xiv, 6).

"I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" (i.e., "pressed down and running over") (John x, 10).

"Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life" (John v, 40).

This is exactly what we mean by "life," the keenness, the fulness, the "tang" which we desire so much.

> "'Tis *life* of which our nerves are scant,
> More life, and fuller, that we want."

The experience of those who have tried fellowship with Jesus shows that "in Him is Life, and the life is the light of men" (John i, 4). The greatest excitement the keenest zest, the finest adventure is the life with Jesus, the "life which is life indeed." Those who have tried it are not at all surprised to hear a modern society girl declare, "I find more excitement in life with Jesus than I ever got out of all the cocktails, dances and hectic nights which I have just left." If you do not

believe that, it is because you have not tried ; so you cannot argue the point.

Jesus' own attitude and behaviour point to that same "Fulness" of life which so many have tried to convert into "Emptiness." Dr. J. F. McFadyen, in his "Jesus and Life" (page 139), reminds us that :

"Jesus attends feasts, is a guest at a wedding, has joyous intercourse with men. His Gospel is 'new wine,' the kingdom is a wedding feast. He fears to meet no man or woman ; the touch of the unclean defiled the Pharisee ; the touch of Jesus made the unclean clean. He found the Sabbath a burden ; He changed it into a day of rest and glad worship. The men of Israel, trying to keep the Law imposed by their priests, suggested to Jesus a yoke of bullocks stumbling along with hatred in their hearts under a crushing load. The followers of Jesus are also called to take the yoke, but they pull with all their hearts a burden that seems light, because the Master who guides them is One who loves them and whom they love. Most significant of all, Jesus deliberately contrasts His own way of life with the asceticism of the Baptist. His readiness to enjoy life's good things, He tells us, had given a handle to His enemies, who accused Him of gluttony and drunkenness."

This "Life," which Jesus offers, has a further advantage over the more ordinary life which we know so well. It is not only more vivid, more exciting, more real ; it is also more lasting. We admit quite frankly that *our* kind of life has its limitations ; "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for *to-morrow we die.*" The very brevity which is all the world can offer makes more urgent and desperate our anxiety to enjoy it ; but there is a strange quality in the life which Jesus

offers. It is not only "Life that is life indeed" ; it is also "Life everlasting." That is to say, it begins NOW, the minute we ask for it ; and it NEVER STOPS AGAIN. What we have previously looked towards with horror or disappointment or despair as "death," the end of our brief period of enjoyment and activity, now becomes a mere episode, an incident, with no power whatever to stop our life, but only opening it out into fuller and richer experiences of the joy of living. This is, to say the least of it, a great advantage.

Are there, then, NO limitations in Christianity? Have we NO sacrifices to make? Are all the good people wrong who speak of "giving up" ?

There are obviously and certainly "givings up" in taking the life which Jesus offers, but they are not as gloomy as one would imagine ; for Jesus always promises that whatever you give up you get much more in return ; and that not in some future, ethereal, "above the clouds" existence, for which you have to wait until you are "dead,"—but here and now, in *this* world.

His words are clear enough. "There is no man that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold NOW IN THIS TIME, houses and brethren and sisters and mother and children and lands, with persecution ; and in the age to come eternal life."

This is the only example in history of anyone promising an immediate return of 10,000 per cent. on your investment ; and not only promising, but paying it, as all who have invested on His terms can testify. Once more, if you don't believe it, it is because you haven't tried it.

NO, it all boils down to this. "The presentation of Jesus in the I.N.R.I. picture is a LIE; Swinburne's "Pale Galilean" is a LIE; all who follow Jesus with gloom and misery and sadness are, consciously or unconsciously, putting out an impression of Him which is essentially a LIE. The whole emasculated conception comes from the Chief Liar, Satan himself, who is the Father of Lies, who would like us to believe that Jesus is like that.

If by any means, of robbery or trickery, he can persuade us to turn away from Jesus, he will do so. If he can frighten us away, lure us away, even enter into the church and give us such a travesty of Jesus as we cannot possibly accept, that is what he is out for; but if the Word of God be correct, if Jesus is so powerful and radiant a personality, so vitally, joyously and courageously a MAN—in addition to all else that He is—then Satan is driven from the field. We are drawn by the sheer force of an all-conquering personality; and Jesus, not the "pale Galilean," not the "mild, pacific, gentle, yielding, long-suffering" soul, but Jesus who is the "Life which is life indeed," becomes the Light and the Life of us all.

"I am come that they might have life."

"Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

NOTE.—There is a certain type of question which is so constantly asked that it seems wise here to add a definite Scripture guidance. The question varies in detail, but is always the same in essence. It is the question "May I?" or "Is it right. . .?"

"Is it right to smoke ? Is it right to dance ? May I go to the pictures ? Or the theatre ? What about cards—sweepstakes—cocktails . . . ?"

Let us examine, first of all, what the principle of our answer is going to be. Shall we work on the principle enunciated quite recently by one speaker, "We love Jesus so much *that we are always trying how far away from Him we can keep* without being outside the pale of Christianity ?"

If that is your attitude, there is no more to be said.

For others, who are really concerned with these questions, there is very definite Scripture guidance.

1. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient ; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (I Cor. vi, 12).

No-one can dictate what you shall or shall not do, in matters about which the Word of God gives no definite direction.

2. "Thou shalt love *the Lord thy God* . . . and *thy neighbour* as *thyself*."

Take it in the order (*a*) Self ; (*b*) Neighbour ; (*c*) God.

(*a*) *Self*. "Know ye not that your body is the Temple . . ." (I Cor. vi, 19).

No man has a right to spoil his body. Don't lay down any hard and fast rule here for everybody, because what is one man's meat is another man's poison. You must make your own rules for your own body, based on your own and other people's experience of what is most likely to suit you; based also on how much you love *yourself*, and how keen you are

to get the best out of yourself, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.

"Let no man judge you in meat or drink or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath" (Col. ii, 16).

(*b*) *Neighbour.* "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak" (I Cor. viii, 9).

"Through thy knowledge, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ?" (I Cor. viii, 11).

"When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (I Cor. viii, 12).

It all depends, you see, on how much you love your neighbour.

(*c*) *God.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength."

To sum up, and again in as general terms as we may,

"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

"Give none offence (cause for stumbling) . . . even as I . . . not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (I Cor. x, 31-33).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### "THE EMASCULATED CONCEPTION OF CHRIST

### (C) DEATH

LET us pause now, for a moment, to see how far we have gone.

We have examined certain current conceptions of Jesus, most of which we have always accepted because we were trained in them from our earliest years. We have looked at Jesus in His home life ; we have gone into His interpretation both of Love and of Life.

It would be futile, of course, to say that the interpretations of Jesus with which we have been dealing are totally and absolutely wrong. If they were, our minds could never have accepted them. There is a substratum of truth in each of them, and it is that very element of truth which makes it so difficult to discuss them adequately.

We *do* believe that Jesus is the Friend of the working-man and working-woman ; that He trod life's pathway on our level of human experience. It is of an inestimable value to us that "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv, 15).

We rejoice that "Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped after to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself . . . " (Phil. ii, 6-8).

We know, too, that there was much in Him that

was gentle, meek, and lowly, "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter ii, 23).

And we remember that the life He offers us, while it is fulness of life, is also heroic and sacrificial life.

All this leads us directly to the point that the errors in the interpretation of Jesus are not so much in the *statement* as in the *emphasis;* and we believe that the *emphasis* has been made by Satan himself to detract from the dignity, honour and authority of Jesus, and to keep men away from Him.

If this be true in these smaller matters, how much more difficult will it be to tread correctly as we enter the most sacred of all considerations, the death of Jesus upon the Cross. For here the contest will be all the keener ; and here we are convinced that Satan has brought forth all his subtility and wields his utmost skill to turn men away from reality by focusing their minds on that which is of lesser import. To put it in one sentence,

"Too much emphasis has been placed upon the physical sufferings of Christ in the Crucifixion, and not enough upon the work He accomplished there."

Or to express it in another way . . .

"Our minds have been concentrated too closely upon the historic fact of the Cross for us to remember as we should the Cosmic Fact behind that Cross."

Or, yet again,

"Our salvation does not depend upon the judicial murder of Jesus by the Chief Priests and the Roman power, but upon the Everlasting Purpose of God for us which Jesus came to carry out."

Now it is exactly that emphasis upon the temporal, historic, physical fact which Satan is anxious we should keep, because thereby we are kept from too clear a remembrance of the eternal, invisible reality. That emphasis is continually held before the minds of the worshippers by means of images—although we have a definite command of the Most High, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image . . ."—images and pictures which definitely and determinedly set the attention upon the physical sufferings of Jesus—and upon nothing else. Take the "Seven Stations of the Cross" as an example, which are all fixed upon the sufferings and the dying of Christ; the crucifix which is so often, almost universally, presented, with its emphasis upon the dead Christ; the art and pictures of the Roman Church, which, with the exception of those which are in honour of the "Queen of Heaven," are all concerned with a dying or a dead Christ.

Now Christianity is not built upon the Cross of Calvary, but upon the Garden of Resurrection. Our symbol is not the Cross of Shame but the Open Tomb of Victorious Triumph and Glory. We are, it is true, "*buried* with Christ" in Baptism, but only that we may be "raised with Him into newness of life." Paul prays indeed that he may know "the fellowship of His sufferings," but it is for the sake of the "power of His resurrection"; and when he says "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ," it is as the instrument of his own salvation, and not as a symbol of the dead Christ; for he continues in thought "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

The emphasis upon the actual physical sufferings of

Christ has done much to revolt the minds of many from the whole question of the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus. Much of the phraseology of our hymns and of a certain type of preaching is crude, and deterrent to the unaccustomed mind ; in fact, unless you have been taught to see what there is behind the physical suffering, the Cross can have little meaning for you at all.

Moreover, this emphasis has led to the wildest statements of doctrine in the history of the church, from "so much suffering for so much sin," to "God requiring the sacrifice of blood before He can forgive." This, and much worse, has shocked the moral sense of humanity, until many have banished the Cross and the Death of Christ altogether from their teaching. So much can false emphasis do for us.

We cannot now do more than suggest one or two thoughts on the more positive side, which the reader may work out to their logical conclusion.

1. It is not the blood, the actual physical element flowing in the veins of Christ, with which we are concerned. It is the blood-*shedding*, the letting out of the life ; for "the blood is the life."

2. It is not the act of Pilate and Caiaphas, which brought Jesus to a judicial murder, which saves us from our sins. It is the voluntary self-giving of Jesus which alone has value. In this sense, "we are saved by His life," by that continual self-giving which was His ; yet the supreme act of self-giving was His entirely *voluntary* yielding to death, even the death of the Cross.

"No man taketh my life away from me, I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and power to

take it again. This commandment received I from my Father."

When Pilate said to Jesus, "Knowest thou not that I have power to release you and power to deliver you up," Jesus answered immediately, "Thou wouldest have no power at all against me unless it had been given thee from above."

3. It is not even the historic hour on Calvary nearly 2,000 years ago which concerns us; but it is the eternal fact which is at the heart of God. We are dealing not so much with the Jesus crucified outside Jerusalem by Rome and apostate Judah, but with "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." When John, on the island of Patmos, looked upon reality and saw the eternal throne of Jehovah, he saw "in the midst of the throne a Lamb standing as it had been slain." THAT is the salvation which is ours.

The Cross of Calvary is "the focusing into history of that which was eternal and timeless in the heart of God Himself." That which *always was* in the heart of God, His love, His holiness, His sacrifice, is, in the Cross, brought down to the level of our human experience, so that we may *see* it, believe it, and therein find salvation.

4. The everlasting purpose of God for the Redemption of the Race and the Salvation of the Soul, working itself out on the higher levels of "The secret place of the Most High," meets the age-long purpose of Satan for the ruin of the race, working itself out on the lower levels of human passion and sin.

The point in human history where these two meet is the collision at Calvary. At the Cross, God's Holy-Love at its best meets Satan's malignity at its worst;

meets it, and vanquishes it. What seems at first to be Satan's triumph is turned completely round upon himself; he is routed and put to flight once for all, not only by the glory of the Cross, but by the triumph of the Open Tomb.

5. God's Holy-Love, eternal and timeless, which is the very essence of His nature, meets man's deepest sin and need; the one doing its worst in hatred and black rebellion and degradation; the other doing its best in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. These two meet not so much at Calvary as in Gethsemane, where the sin so far wins as to bring from Him the cry: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." The bitterness of the conflict brings out the sweat of blood, but Christ wins, in the victory cry "Not My will, but Thine, be done." The black darkness of "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me" changes to the dawn-light of "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"; and He "dismissed His spirit" (gave up the ghost), having finished the work God had given Him to do.

6. Thus, that last great historic conflict between the "seed of the woman" and the "shining one" (Gen. iii, 15), which we symbolise in a Cross, began in a garden (Gethsemane), and ended in a garden (Resurrection). Just so, the whole eternal sweep of the story begins in a garden (Eden) and ends in a garden (the heavenly city). If, in between, man turns God's gardens into slums, that is only typical of the heinousness of sin. In the first garden of history, man loses the "Tree of Life," to find it growing and bearing fruit in the last garden of Revelation.

In Gethsemane, the heart of Christ is broken by the burden of man's sin; in the garden of Resurrection,

it is Satan's power that is broken; Christ "leads captivity captive, and gives gifts unto men." Centrally between these two is the death upon the Cross, where we can see, in a manner we can never forget, "Jesus crucified for us." It is at *that* point of the conflict that man's heart breaks, his sin is taken away, and he gives himself to Christ, "who loved me and gave Himself for me."

7. If John is right in seeing in Christ the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," then the Cross is more than the sign of Crucifixion; it is the underlying structure of the moral and physical Universe. No part of life can escape it: we live in a world which from end to end has been "purchased unto Himself with His most precious blood." That right of His to His own we may accept or reject; such is our human freedom; our acceptance or rejection seals our own eternal fate, but cannot affect the eternal fact of God's Holy-Love. The "Cross" is bigger than Calvary.

> "The hands upon that cruel tree
> Extended wide as ocean's span
> Have gathered to the Son of Man
> The ages past and yet to be.
>
> One reaching backward to the prime
> Enfolds the children of the morn;
> The other to a Race unborn
> Extends the crowning gift of Time."

8. Finally, you can express in the finite shape of a crucifix or a picture that murder of Jesus Christ which was Satan's last and utmost attempt to win the age-

long conflict; but you can never express in visible form the eternal reality behind it. If Satan can fix your mind on the one, he may succeed in making you miss the other.

In this world-shaking conflict, there is infinitely more than the suffering, pain-racked, dying or dead Christ; there is the victorious, eternal, only-begotten Son of God, heir of the world, who was "with the Father from the foundation of the world"; who triumphed over sin, death and the grave, and who shall come again to rule over the kingdoms of the world.

*That* Christ, living, reigning, triumphant, glorious, is the Inspiration and the Ruler of our lives, who died, not that we might luxuriate in morbid feelings of His sufferings, or lose ourselves in pious sympathy with His agony, but that "through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, and might deliver all them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii, 14, 15).

Thus we have to do with no dead or dying Christ. Our crucifixes must be divested of the human figure, and stand vacant as a symbol that "He is not here, He is risen."

"For now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For as by man came death, by man came also the Resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. xv, 20-22).

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power . . . buried with Him

in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead.

"And you, being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii, 9-15).

## CHAPTER SIX

### "THE COMING OF THE KING"

We have already seen that there is a tendency to separate the Scriptures of the Old Testament from those of the New, and to make Jesus merely the product of His country and of His age. That this position cannot be maintained will be evident as soon as we take up the study of the New Testament statements concerning Jesus Christ. First, we shall examine the things that are said about Him by others, and, secondly, the things that He said about Himself in relation to Old Testament affairs.

We must remember first of all—and always—that the minds of the people who figure in the New Testament story were steeped in Old Testament truth. They were the people of one Book; the Sacred Scriptures (the Old Testament) were ingrained in them from childhood. They knew them as we never do, as it sometimes seems we never shall. They had the Easterner's love of the written word, which is manifest to-day in the reverence of the Hindu or of the Chinese for his sacred classics.

In China to-day, where education has only reached a very small proportion of the populace, the quickest way to touch the imagination and win the sympathy of a crowd is to quote from the classics of Confucius. Immediately even the ordinary coolie or the farm labourer will respond with a brightening of the eye and a quickening of the interest. Quote one half a sentence and he will quote the other. Give him a fragment and his mind automatically reproduces the context, so that you need not elaborate your point;

he knows what you *mean* before you have finished your quotation. Carry him a certain way with you in quotation, and STOP ; his mind immediately *runs on* and finds the rest of your meaning for you.

If this be true of the less educated class in China, it is a thousand-fold more true of the "literati," who are steeped in their national lore from beginning to end. Here is the true parallel to the state of affairs in Palestine in Jesus' time. Where every school-boy was trained in the Scriptures from his earliest years ; where the Scribe or the Rabbi gave himself to the education of all the nation all the time ; where a man who did not know "The Law" was "accursed" ; where the Old Testament, plus the teaching of Rabbinical tradition (with which we shall come into contact in a later chapter), was supreme ; you begin to realise something of the background of thought upon which were flashed the Old Testament allusions that we find everywhere in the New Testament.

With this background in mind we turn to the Gospels to discover what was the psychological condition of the actors in the great drama which is there unfolded, and what would be their impression of the things written and said.

In the very first words of the New Testament (Matt. i, 1) we read : "The book of the generation (in modern English, "line of descent") of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Here, at the commencement, the mind of the reader is centred upon two great characters of the Israel history ; *David*, the first king of the United Nation of Israel (which was made up of the *two* nations, Israel and Judah, Northern and Southern, just as Great Britain is made up of the two nations

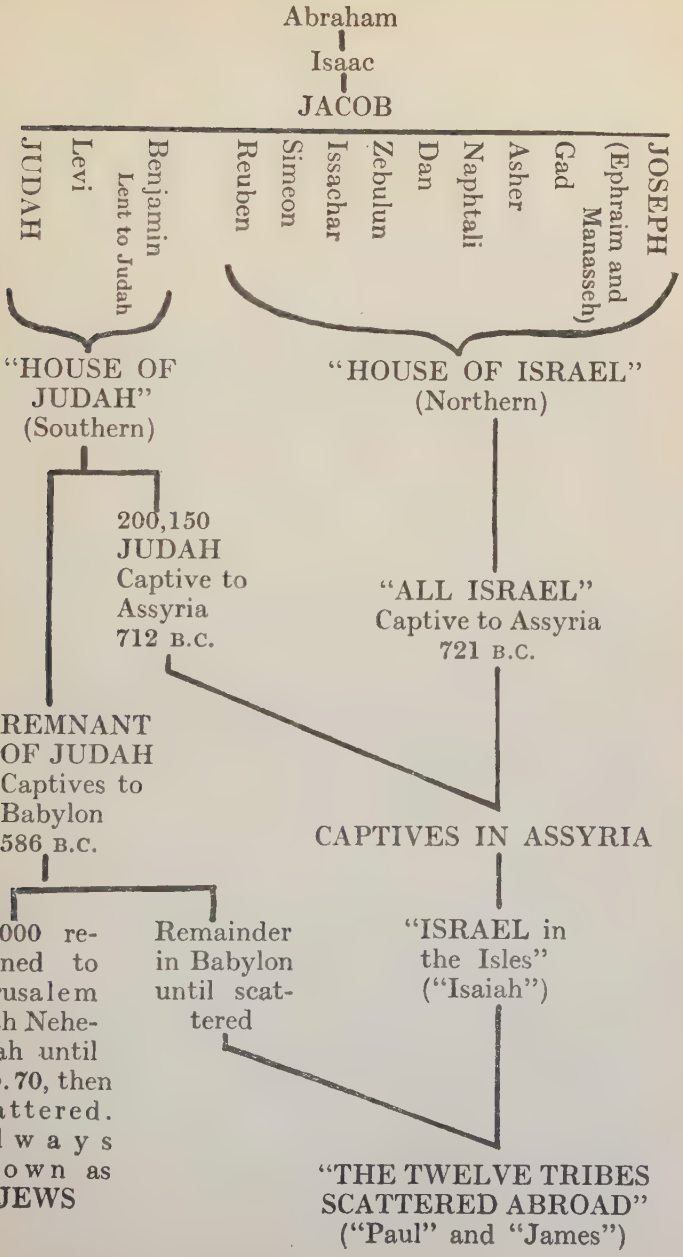
England and Scotland, Southern and Northern, omitting for the moment the other nations of Great Britain); and *Abraham*, the father and founder of that nation. That the nation of which we are speaking here can not be called the JEWISH nation will be clear from a study of the historic charts which will also make it quite manifest that to speak of Abraham as a JEW, or David as a JEW, is to convict oneself of ignorance of the history of the Old Testament and inability to avoid gross and ridiculous anachronisms. This will be made more manifest as we proceed.

Chart 1 shows quite clearly that the "JEW" is only a very small fragment of Three out of the Twelve Tribes which made up the whole nation Israel; and that even that small fragment did not appear in history until quite late in the development of the nation; as a matter of fact, not until after the nation as such was disintegrated and for the most part scattered and lost to sight.

Strictly speaking, the broken fragment known as "JEWISH" does not come into the Bible story AT ALL until after the Babylonian captivity. It is on page 441 of the Bible that the name "Jew" first occurs; so that the writer, if he intended to do as our modern scholars tell us he intended and write a "History of the Jews," never mentions his "hero" at all until he is half-way through the Book; surely a miracle of literary ingenuity and eccentricity.

It is evident, of course, that the history in the Old Testament is the history of the whole nation Israel; made up of the two sections Judah (Southern) and Israel (Northern); that Israel (Northern) went early into captivity, *accompanied by a large section of Judah (Southern);* that the *remnant* of Judah

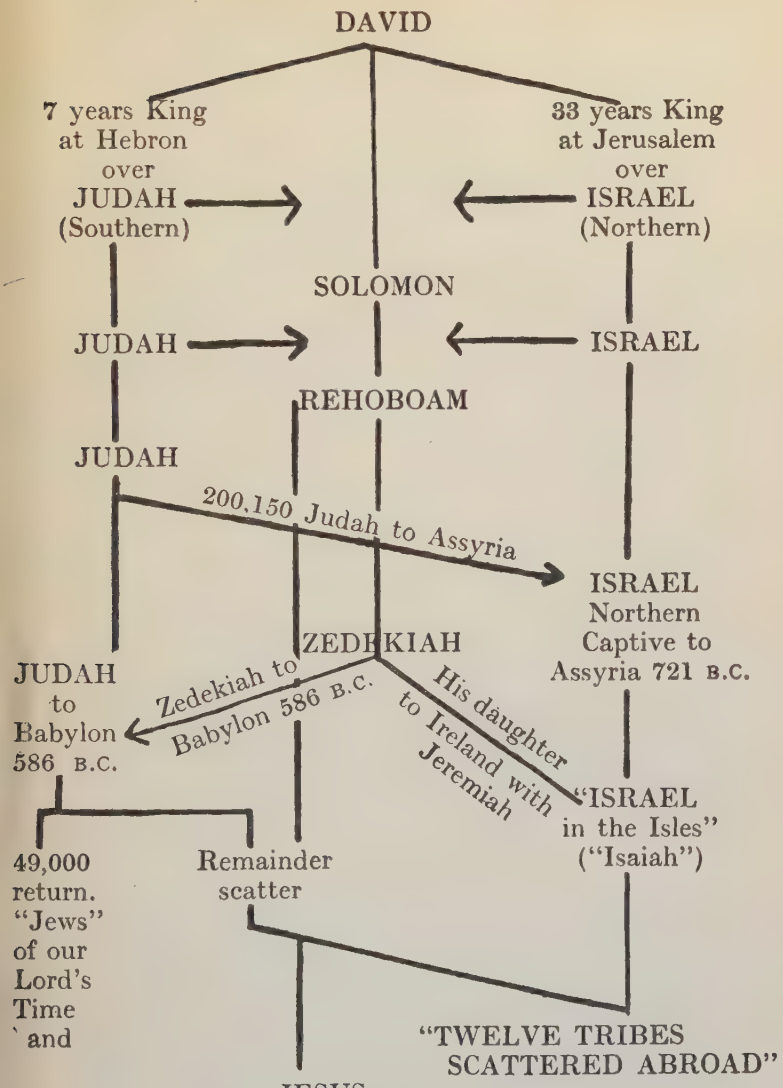
# WHO IS "THE JEW"



(Southern) stayed in Palestine until the Babylon captivity, 150 years later, while Israel and Judah had already disappeared among the outside nations; that the *remnant* of Judah which went to Babylon again split into two parts, one *remaining in Babylon* and eventually disappearing among the nations, like Israel and the rest of Judah had already done; that the other and smaller section of the *remnant* of Judah (49,000 of them to be exact) returned to Palestine, were the *only* section of the whole nation which was ever called "JEWS," and remained there in Palestine until our Lord's day, and until they were scattered by the Romans in A.D. 70. From that time they have remained, known to us all as "Jews," a pathetic remnant of a remnant of one tribe out of twelve. The history of the Old Testament is, strictly speaking, the history of the other eleven-twelfths. This other eleven-twelfths of the nation is by the prophets called by various names, "Israel," or "Ephraim," or "Jacob" or "House of Israel" or "House of Joseph," etc.; while in the earlier history, the Southern kingdom is called "Judah" or "House of Judah," and the Northern Kingdom "Israel," or "House of Israel." Only the broken fragment of which we are speaking, namely, that which returned from Babylon under Nehemiah, is ever called by the name "Jew."

Chart 2 deals with the "House of David" which was established by an oath of the Almighty, with which we shall deal more fully shortly. It shows that David was established as King, first over the "House of Judah" (for 7 years); then over the House of Judah and the House of Israel combined (for 33 years). His House (the "House of David") was settled to Him by God to be an everlasting House. It remained over Israel and Judah until his grandson Rehoboam's day,

# "THE HOUSE OF DAVID"




"I am not come but to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel"

"The Kingdom of God is taken from you and . . ."

when Israel (Northern) broke loose from the control of the House of David.

David's House then remained over what remained of the House of Judah until the year 586 B.C., when the remnant of Judah was carried to Babylon. The "House of David" did NOT go to Babylon. The direct line of that House was transplanted to the West, in the person of Zedekiah's daughter; and there, the House of David was re-united to the "House of Israel," or "Israel in the Isles" as Isaiah calls them.

Thus it is quite clear that neither David, nor those descended from him, ever were part of either the House of Israel or the House of Judah; but always *above them both* as the "House of David." David, of course, and his descendants, sprang from the *Tribe* of Judah, though he manifestly has nothing whatever to do with the "Jews."

Jesus, as both Matthew and Luke point out, was descended from the "House of David," not through Zedekiah, but along another line; He comes, then, not as belonging to Judah or to Israel, but as heir to the throne of David. "He shall sit upon the throne of His father David."

That it is equally incorrect to think or speak of Abraham as "a Jew" will be clear from the first chart without further comment. When it is realised how many generations intervened between Abraham and "the Jews" it will be seen how absurd it is to give to the founder of a nation the nickname that belongs, only and always, to his great-great-great-great-grandsons.

So we see that in the very first verse of the New

Testament, when Matthew begins his Gospel by speaking of Jesus as "the son of David, the son of Abraham," he is lifting the person of Jesus right out of the category of "the Jew," or of "Judah," or of "Israel," and is placing Him with David, King of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah, and with Abraham, the progenitor of these nations. It is obvious that the line of descent is not so much personal as national, and Matthew is deliberately placing Jesus in His national setting. What was His connection with David and Abraham will become plain as we proceed.

Here, then, at the outset of our study, we part company completely with that school of thought which would separate the Old Testament from the New. The writer of the Gospel absolutely identifies them. It cannot be true that "the Old Testament" is simply a record of "Jewish" national hopes and ideals, since it deals with the whole national entity of Israel, of whom "the Jew" was such a very infinitesimal part.

Equally it must be false that "Abraham is unhistorical," and that "We cannot go to the Old Testament records for historical statement"; or again, "Abraham is a myth"—"a legendary character of early folklore"—"a wandering Bedouin sheik," or any of the things by stating which modern scholars desire to undermine the reality of the Revelation of God. If these statements of modern scholarship were true, what would be the use of relating Jesus Christ thus closely and definitely with Abraham and with David?

Before proceeding further, we should deal with a question which will already have occurred to the discerning reader. "It is all very well," he will say, "to commence our study with Matthew, for everyone

knows that Matthew wrote with a special object in view and he will use all the special pleading he can. Besides, the view of many modern scholars is that John's is the first Gospel, the earliest record we have of what men thought of Jesus."

In that case, then, we shall turn aside temporarily and see if John gives us any further light as to this personality of Jesus Christ. We shall not need to proceed further than his first chapter, in which we shall find the testimonies of the writer himself, of the Baptist, of Simon, of Philip and of Nathanael.

*The Testimony of the Writer.* "In the beginning was the Word." Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament begins "In the beginning God." If John's be indeed the first Gospel, then the New and the Old Testaments commence at the same point, with the same phrase, an interesting detail of the connection between them. Jesus is, from the very start, linked up with the Creation ; He was in the beginning with God ; He *was* God ; "without Him was not anything made that has been made."

*The Testimony of the Baptist.* "He that cometh after me is preferred before me ; for He was before me" (Verse 15).

"I am the Voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as saith the prophet Esaias" (Verse 23).

"Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Verse 29).

"That He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come" (Verse 31).

*The Testimony of Simon.* "We have found the

Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (Verse 41).

*The Testimony of Philip.* "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth" (Verse 45).

*The Testimony of Nathanael.* "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel" (Verse 49).

Now, in the face of these statements, no one can say "We live in New Testament times and can therefore dispense with the Old Testament." For, in order to understand what the speakers have in mind, and what the author and his readers *thought* the speakers had in mind, we shall have to try to find answers to the following questions.

*Question* 1. What is the context and content of Isaiah's prophecy referred to in verse 23 ? (Isaiah 40).

*Question* 2. What was John the Baptist's idea of the "Lamb of God" referred to in verse 29 ?

*Question* 3. What did the Baptist mean by that "Israel" to whom Jesus was to be made manifest ?

*Question* 4. What did Simon mean by the "Messias" ? And what is the meaning of the word "Christ" ?

*Question* 5. Where shall we find "Moses and the Law," and also the "prophets" who, Philip said, wrote of Jesus ?

*Question* 6. And, finally, what was in Nathanael's mind when he called Jesus "King of Israel" ?

All these questions arise in the very first chapter of John's Gospel. They suggest an intimate knowledge, on the part both of the writer and of the speakers, of the contents and ideas of the Old Testament ; they

also suggest the closest connection between those Old Testament ideas and the person of Jesus. It will be seen that, unless you can satisfactorily—and *in accordance with Scripture*—answer these questions, you cannot estimate the place Jesus held in the popular mind, or in the national economy, as He entered upon His public ministry. One may venture to assert that there are at least four of these questions which the average preacher of the Word will NOT be able to answer correctly "in accordance with Scripture."

If you cannot "block in" the background and the foundation that brings you to your chief character, how can you expect rightly to interpret that character, His teaching, His work, or His influence upon His generation or upon the world? No, a complete knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament is essential to a complete knowledge and understanding of Jesus. Refuse the one and you miss the other.

In no other case in history has anyone ever attempted to interpret an outstanding personality, be he philosopher, or writer, or leader of men, without at least an attempt to study the background of his life, the events that led to his appearance, and the re-action of previous history upon both his personality and his work. What we do in the case of Napoleon, or Shakespeare, or Emanuel Kant, we should do no less in the greatest case of all, the very Son of God, who does not appear in history as an unexplained phenomenon without connection with what precedes or follows Him; and, if our study of His background and foundation leads us into unusual paths, it is because He is Himself unusual; and we may thereby be led only into a fuller and clearer

understanding and admiration, not only of Him, but of the Father who sent Him.

We must now return to our study of the preparation for His coming from which our irruption into John's Gospel turned us temporarily aside. We are now back in the first chapter of Matthew, of which we had only seen the first verse. The questions that Matthew raises in our minds we shall tabulate as we have done in the case of the first chapter of John, and we shall endeavour to answer them later all together.

*Matthew i*, 21. "He shall save His people from their sins."

*Question* 7. In the mind of Mary, to whom the statement was made, who are "His people" ?

*Matthew i*, 23. "Behold a virgin shall be with child . . . "

*Question* 8. Where is this prophecy ?

*Question* 9. What is its context ?

Now we turn to the commencement of Luke's Gospel, where we have a fuller account of the preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. It is always assumed that Luke had special means of learning, from the women's point of view, the inner facts of the case. As a physician, he probably heard more intimate details than others would receive.

*Luke i*, 32. "The angel said unto her, 'Fear not, Mary . . . thou shalt bring forth a son and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David ; and He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.' "

*Question* 10. What, according to the Scripture, is this "throne of David ? "

*Question* 11. What, also, according to the Scripture, is this "House of Jacob " ?

*Question* 12. What, also, according to the Scripture, is this "kingdom" of which there shall be no end ?

We have asked, in each case, for answers "in accordance with the Scripture," because we are trying to discover the contents of Mary's mind, the ideas she would receive at the message of the angel. She could only interpret his remarks in the light of such Scriptures as she possessed. It is ours to discover what these Scriptures told her.

In the song of Mary which follows, which we call the Magnificat, there is definite reference all the way through to some promise made by Almighty God to Abraham.

*Luke i*, 54. "He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spake to our forefathers, to Abraham and to His seed for ever."

*Question* 13. Who is "His servant Israel" ?

*Question* 14. What was it that "He spake to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever" ?

The song of Zacharias (The Benedictus, a regular part of the English Church Service week by week), on the occasion of the birth of John the Baptist, runs like this. . . .

*Luke i*, 68-79. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the House of His servant David ; as He spake by the mouth of

His holy prophets which have been since the world began ; that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hands of all that hate us ; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant ; the oath which He sware to our forefather Abraham, that He would grant unto us . . . to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."

*Question* 15. Why "Lord God of Israel" ? And in what sense are they "His people" ?

*Question* 16. What is "The House of His servant David" ?

*Question* 17. Who are the "holy prophets which have been since the world began" ?

*Question* 18. What is "the mercy promised to our fathers" ?

*Question* 19. What is "the holy covenant, the oath which He sware unto our father Abraham that He would grant unto us" ?

*Question* 20. Who are those "that sit in darkness" ?

It will be evident that the whole of the references here are to some long past revelation from God to "Israel," through prophets, the "House of David," and through an "oath and covenant" to Abraham ; none of which can have any meaning at all if the Old Testament Scriptures are merely "myth, folklore and tradition" ; and the New Testament statements about Jesus are a mere meaningless jumble of words, unless we are prepared to go all the way with some modern scholars, and content ourselves with the thought that "these primitive and elementary minds were totally misinterpreting the meaning of their own Scriptures."

In which case we shall have to find a truer meaning than they did, and a meaning which will fit *all the facts;* and if we think that such mistakes of interpretation of the Old Testament are possible in the very first chapters of Matthew, John and Luke, we shall have to say what we mean when we claim that the New Testament is, in any sense, an "inspired Book."

More briefly, now, in the second chapter of Luke.

*Luke ii*, 11. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour."

*Luke ii*, 25. "Simeon . . . waiting for the consolation of Israel."

*Luke ii*, 32. "A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of my people Israel."

*Luke ii*, 34. "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."

*Luke ii*, 38. "Anna . . . spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

And now, once more, in Matthew.

*Matthew ii*, 1. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem saying, 'Where is He that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East and are come to worship Him.' When Herod the King had heard these things he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

"And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

"And they said unto him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea;

for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.'"

Here we may cease our quotations for the moment, for we have exhausted the stories connected with the coming of the Babe of Bethlehem.

One question may safely be asked; "To any ordinary reader, say a Chinese or a Japanese, coming for the first time to the story without any pre-conceived notions, what would be the whole conception concerning this child whose birth was thus announced?"

Would it not be something like this . . . ?

"Here is evidently a baby going to be born, linked by descent with David, the first king of the nation Israel, and with Abraham, the founder of that nation. His destiny seems to be closely linked in some way with the destiny of that nation Israel whom God seems to call "my people Israel."

"This baby is born in the city of David, the royal city; it is promised that he shall sit on the throne of David, his great ancestor; that he shall govern his people Israel; and all this is come about in order that some promise, an oath or a covenant made by God to Abraham, shall be carried out. To this it seems that all the prophets from the beginning of the world have testified; now they are to be vindicated."

"This kingdom is to be without end, with this Jesus, now about to be born, sitting upon the throne, which is the throne of David."

Surely a most unusual child; a most unusual preparation for His coming; a very different interpre-

tation of Scripture from that to which we are accustomed. Can we find a better one, that fits all the facts ?

It is to be noticed that we have so far *interpreted* nothing. We have merely *quoted* New Testament statements. We have asked questions, it is true, but they are all questions which our Chinese or Japanese friend would be sure to ask, and we ought to be able to answer them. We must, however, answer them not by *interpreting* or saying what we *think* they ought to mean, but by *quoting* or saying what they actually *do* mean according to the Scriptures from which their ideas have come. Is this a fair and honest method to adopt?

Very well, then.

The things we shall want chiefly to know may be summed up a little more briefly than in our twenty questions. They are.

1. What is the OATH AND COVENANT made to Abraham, which Jesus came to perform ?

2. Who are MY PEOPLE ISRAEL whom Jesus came to redeem and to govern ?

3. What and where is THE THRONE OF DAVID on which Jesus is to sit ?

4. What do the PROPHETS say about Israel and its King ?

All these questions should be easily answerable from the Scriptures, and from the Scriptures alone. This we shall see in the next chapters. For the moment, does not the whole of our preliminary examination remind you of the words of Isaiah—once more—

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isaiah ix, 6-7).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### "THE KINGDOM OF THE KING"

FOUR questions are to be answered, as closely as possible from the Scriptures themselves.

### I. WHAT IS THE OATH AND COVENANT MADE TO ABRAHAM?

*Gen. xii,* 1-3. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.' "

*Gen. xiii,* 14-17. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, 'Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.' "

*Gen. xv,* 1-6, 18. "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying '. . . Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them'; and He said unto him, 'So shall thy seed be.' In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'Unto thy seed have I

given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates'."

*Gen. xvii*, 1-8. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, 'I am the Almighty God ; walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.' And Abram fell on his face ; and God talked with him saying, 'As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name be any more called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham ; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.' "

*Gen. xvii*, 15-21. "And God said unto Abraham, 'As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her ; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations ; kings of people shall be of her . . .' And God said, 'Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed ; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.' "

*Gen. xviii*, 18. "And the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty

nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him ?' "

*Gen. xxi*, 12. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

*Gen. xxii*, 15-18. " 'By myself have I sworn,' saith the Lord, 'that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' "

The things promised to Abraham then, in order, are:

1. I will make thee a great nation.
2. I will bless thee.
3. I will make thy name great.
4. Thou shalt be a blessing.
5. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.
6. In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
7. All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever.
8. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth.
9. And as the stars of heaven.
10. I will give thee this land from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.
11. I will multiply thee exceedingly.
12. Thou shalt be a father of many nations.
13. Kings shall come out of thee.
14. I will establish my covenant to be an everlasting covenant.

15. All the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.
16. I will establish my covenant with Isaac for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.
17. In Isaac shall thy seed be called.
18. Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

This, and this only, can be what Zecharias had in mind when he said that the coming of Jesus was "to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham that he would grant unto us." There is no other covenant, or mercy, or oath, mentioned in connection with Abraham in the Scriptures.

It must also have been what was in the mind of Mary when she said "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy as he spake to our father Abraham and to his seed for ever."

As at this stage we are not *interpreting*, but only answering our own questions from the Scriptures, we must leave to a later stage the question as to *how* that oath and covenant was fulfilled in Jesus.

## II. WHO ARE "MY PEOPLE ISRAEL"?

1. Isaac is the heir of Abraham, and the inheritor of the promise.

*Gen. xvii*, 19. "I will establish my covenant with Isaac for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."

*Gen. xxi*, 12. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

2. Isaac married Rebekah, to whom, as she left home, her relatives expressed their wish for her in these terms.

*Gen. xxiv*, 60. "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

3. Rebekah gave birth to twin sons, Esau and Jacob, of whom, *at birth*, God said:

*Gen. xxv*, 23. "Two nations are in thy womb . . . and the one people shall be stronger than the other people ; and the elder shall serve the younger."

4. In the natural course of events, Esau, being the elder, would have been the heir ; but in accordance with the passage quoted above, Esau despised his birthright.

*Gen. xxv*, 27-34. "And Jacob said, 'Sell me this day thy birthright.' And Esau said, 'Behold, I am at the point to die ; and what profit shall this birthright do to me ?' . . . And he sold his birthright unto Jacob."

Thus twice Jacob succeeds to the inheritance of his father Isaac, once by Divine fiat (xxv, 23), and secondly by Esau's temptation and fall (xxv, 27-34).

5. Meanwhile God has renewed to Isaac the blessing promised to his father Abraham.

*Gen. xxvi*, 3-4. "Sojourn in this land and I will be with thee, and will bless thee ; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father ; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

6. That blessing falls a third time upon Jacob, the younger son, who at the behest of his mother Rebekah impersonates Esau in the presence of the aged Isaac, and receives from him the renewal of the covenant.

*Gen. xxvii*, 27-9. "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let the people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

7. Jacob, the "Supplanter," leaves home, and on the first night of his journey hears God speak to him.

*Gen. xxviii*, 13. "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

8. With the passing of the years, Jacob becomes the father of twelve sons. The blessing of his fathers is again handed on to him by God, and his name is changed from Jacob, "Supplanter," to Israel, "Ruling with God." Thus the twelve sons become the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

*Gen. xxxv*, 9-12. "And God said unto him . . . 'Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name . . . Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.' "

9. Of these twelve sons, Joseph went down to

Egypt (Gen. xxxvii). There he became Governor, married, and had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

*Gen. xli*, 50. "And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On, bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh; For God, said he, hath made me 'FORGET' all my toil and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be 'FRUITFUL' in the land of my affliction."

10. In the time of the famine, Jacob and the eleven brothers of Joseph came down to Egypt and dwelt in Goshen.

*Gen. xlvii*, 5, 6. "And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph saying, 'Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell.' "

11. When Jacob, "Israel," was about to die, he blessed Manasseh and Ephraim, the two sons of Joseph.

*Gen. xlviii*, 5. "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh . . . are mine; as Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine."

*Gen. xlviii*, 13-20. "And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and he said, 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham

and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long until this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.'

"And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, 'Not so, my father; for *this* is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon *his* head.'

"And his father refused and said, 'I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.' "

12. Thus Ephraim, "FRUITFUL," the younger, took precedence of Manasseh, "FORGETFUL," the elder; and not only so, but Ephraim entered into the inheritance and became the heir of the promises.

*I Chron. v*, 1. "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, for he was the firstborn; but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For . . . the birthright was Joseph's."

13. The children of Israel dwelt in hardship in Egypt until their cry came up unto God.

*Ex. ii*, 24-25. "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

14. Moses was sent by God to lead them out. In

all the story of their deliverance from the hands of Pharaoh they are referred to as "My people Israel." (Ex. chap. iii-xiv.) Moses sums it up in his Song of Deliverance, in which he says:

*Ex. xv*, 13. "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed."

15. At Sinai, God said :

*Ex. xix*, 3-6. "Thus shalt thou say to the House of Jacob and tell the children of Israel ; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself ; Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people ; for all the earth is mine ; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."

16. Through the varied experiences of the Wilderness wanderings, they were welded into a nation, with God as their king, and a number of judges over the people. This carried them through the period of the conquest of Canaan, down as far as Samuel's day, when they demanded a king like the nations around them (1 Sam. viii).

17. After Saul's failure as king, David was anointed king by Samuel (1 Sam. xvi).

18. At Saul's death, the tribes divided, David becoming king over Judah at Hebron, while Ish-bosheth became king over "all Israel" at Mahanaim (2 Sam. ii, 1-11).

19. David reigned over Judah seven years in Hebron ; at the end of which time, Ish-bosheth being dead, the rest of the tribes came to him in Hebron,

and he was anointed first king of the United Kingdoms of Israel and Judah (2 Sam. v, 1-5.)

20. This united kingdom was maintained under Solomon ; but in the days of his son Rehoboam, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, again broke away, leaving with Rehoboam only Judah, the priestly tribe of Levi, and Benjamin, a part of "Israel" lent to Judah for the time being (1 Kings, xi, 9-xii, 24).

21. From this time the history follows a double line, "Israel" in the North with Samaria as its capital, Judah in the South with Jerusalem as its capital.

Israel remained in Palestine till 721 B.C., when it was finally and completely taken captive by Assyria (2 Kings, xvii).

Henceforward the "House of Israel" passes out of the history ; though the prophets continue to speak of it under various names, "Ephraim," "Joseph," "Jacob," "House of Jacob," "House of Joseph," "House of Israel."

22. A large portion of Judah was also carried to Assyria about the time that Israel (Northern) went there. The remainder stayed in South Palestine till about 580 B.C., until the whole nation was carried to Babylon. After seventy years, a small section of this captured remnant returned to Palestine under the leadership of Nehemiah.

It was this small fragment which became known as "the Jews," and it was the descendants of this small fragment which were in Palestine in the time of our Lord. With the exception of those few who were of the tribe of Benjamin, the people of Palestine in our Lord's day were NOT the "House of Israel" ; they were only a very small part of the "House of Judah,"

though they appropriated to themselves the name of "Israel" (in the absence of the rest of their nation), just as they have appropriated so many things since.

The two titles "House of Israel" and "House of Judah" were distinct in the minds of the writers of the Old Testament all the way through, from 2 Sam. ii, onwards to the end. They were distinct also, as it may be seen, in the minds of Zecharias and of Mary when they spoke of "My people Israel." It will add much of clearness of understanding, in the reading of both the Old and the New Testaments, if we remember that distinction.

"Judah," or the "House of Judah," is :

(a) Sometimes the whole tribe of Judah.

(b) Sometimes the Kingdom of Judah, resident in South Palestine and including Levi and Benjamin.

(c) Sometimes "the Jew," that small fragment which returned from Babylon, which, after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, were scattered, as "Jews," throughout the world.

"Israel" is :

(a) In the earlier stages, all the Twelve Tribes.

(b) From the time of the crowning of David at Hebron, it is the Northern Kingdom, as distinct from the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

(c) After the disappearance of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the return of the "Jews" from Babylon, the name Israel is used by "the Jews."

(d) In the prophets, Israel is distinct from Judah,

the "House of Israel" is distinct from the "House of Judah"; and "My people Israel" is always the Northern Kingdom, not the Southern.

(e) Since the New Testament writers and characters were so fully conversant with these technicalities, it will be evident that "My people Israel," in the mouth of Jesus and His followers will be the same as it was in the Old Testament. The word "Jew" will be used indiscriminately by foreigners in speaking of the then residents of Palestine, since foreigners were not conversant with the distinctions which were so evident to the Israel peoples themselves. We shall also find the then residents of Palestine, the descendants of that small remnant (49,000) of Judah which returned from Babylon under Nehemiah, using for themselves the name "Israel" (which, as a part of Israel, but only as *a part*, they had a right to) and also allocating to themselves the right to be "God's Chosen People," as they have done ever since. This claim, which has come right down through history ever since and has vitiated all our education in these matters, Jesus Himself denies to "the Jew," as we shall see in due course.

It will be evident from this brief account of the history of the Israel peoples. . . .

1. That "My People Israel," strictly speaking, were only represented in Palestine, in the days of Jesus Christ, by the Tribe of Benjamin. This tribe still remained with Judah up till the time of the scattering of "the Jew" in A.D. 70; its members dwelt largely in the cities of Galilee, from which Jesus drew most of His followers; they were somewhat despised by the "Jews" of Judæa, who called them, with a touch of superiority, "Galileans."

Where the rest of "My People Israel" had gone to we shall try to discover in Chapter 8.

2. That Abraham was not, and could not have been, a "Jew."

3. That the Bible is evidently NOT "a Jewish book."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### "THE THRONE AND PEOPLE OF THE KING"

### III. WHAT IS THIS "THRONE OF DAVID" ON WHICH JESUS IS TO SIT?

THE first King of Israel was Jehovah, and when the people demanded an earthly king, they rejected God.

1 *Sam. viii*, 4, 5. "Then all the elders of Israel . . . said unto Samuel . . . 'Now make us a king to judge us, like all nations.' "

1 *Sam. viii*, 7. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people . . . for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them.' "

1 *Sam. ix*, 16, 17. "To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel . . . this same shall reign over my people."

1 *Sam. x*, 1. "Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head, and kissed him, and said 'Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance.' "

1 *Sam. x*, 19. "And Samuel said unto the children of Israel, 'Ye have this day rejected your God . . . and ye have said unto Him, Nay, but set a king over us.' "

1 *Sam. x*, 24. "And Samuel said . . 'See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like

him among all the people?' And all the people shouted and said, 'God Save the King.' "

1 *Sam. xii*, 19-22. "And all the people said unto Samuel, 'Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not ; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.' And Samuel said unto the people, 'Fear not ; ye have done all this wickedness ; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart . . . For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great Name's sake ; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people.' "

When Saul first departed from the command of the Lord, this word came unto him :

1 *Sam. xiii*, 13. "Thou hast done foolishly ; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which He commanded thee ; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

When Saul failed to destroy Amalek, this message came to him :

1 *Sam. xv*, 23-29. "Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being King . . . The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou."

David was thereupon anointed king (1 Sam. xvi).

He succeeded to the throne on the death of Saul.

2 *Sam. ii*, 4. "The men of Judah came (to Hebron)

and there they anointed David king over the House of Judah."

David reigned over the United Kingdom seven years later.

2 *Sam. v*, 1-5. "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David at Hebron, and spake saying, 'Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh' . . . and they anointed David king over Israel . . . In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months ; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah."

As soon as the affairs of the nation were settled, David desired to build God's house. He received the following message :

2 *Sam. vii*, 10-16. "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more ; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as aforetime. . . And when thy days be fulfilled . . . I will set up thy seed after thee . . . and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. . . If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men . . . but my mercy shall not depart away from him. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee ; thy throne shall be established for ever."

In response to this great promise, David said :

2 *Sam. vii*, 23-29. "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make him a name. . . For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy

people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou, Lord, art become their God."

God's covenant with David is again referred to in many places:

*Psalm lxxxix.* "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 'Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations . . . I will set his hand also in the sea and his right hand in the rivers. . . I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven . . . If his children forsake my law . . . then will I visit their transgression with the rod . . . nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.' "

*Jer. xxxiii,* 17, *ff.* "For thus saith the Lord, 'David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of Israel . . ; if ye can break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne . . . '

"Considerest thou not what this people have spoken saying, 'The two families which the Lord hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? Thus they have

despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them! Thus saith the Lord, 'If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.' "

This throne, then, promised to David and his seed for ever, so long as the sun and the moon endure, can be none other than the throne which Mary had in mind when the angel spoke to her saying, "He shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

And Isaiah, in his Chap. ix:

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

There, then, you have the true position of affairs. If the sun is still shining in the sky, and you can see its light and feel its warmth, you will remember that the throne of David is still in existence somewhere. If you are enjoying the mellow rays of moonlight, and you look up at the stars, you have the word of the Almighty that somewhere the nation Israel is existing, doing what He said it would do; and that over it is the throne upon which David once sat, and upon which Jesus is yet to sit. Where that throne is, and how Jesus shall come to occupy it, will be made clear as we proceed.

## IV. WHAT DO THE PROPHETS SAY ABOUT ISRAEL?

This is a very simple question to ask, but even a cursory examination of the Old Testament Scriptures will show that to attempt even a brief quotation from all the passages available would fill a considerably larger space than we can spare. So we are compelled merely to state how many references there are, under various headings, and leave the student to follow them out for himself.

1. That Israel is God's chosen people. (About fifteen references, in addition to all those that have been already quoted.)

   Ex. vi, 7; Lev. xx, 26; Deut. iv, 7; vii, 6-7; xiv, 2; xxvi, 19; xxvi, 9; xxviii, 9; xxxii, 8-9; 1 Chron. xvi, 12-13; Psalm cxxxv, 4; Isaiah xli, 8-9; lxii, 12; Jer. xxxi, 1; Amos iii, 2.

2. That Israel is an everlasting nation.
   2 Sam. vii, 24; 1 Chron. xvii, 9-10; Isaiah lxvi, 22; Jer. xxxi, 35-36.

3. Blessings promised to Israel as a whole.
   Through Jacob, Gen. xlix; through Balaam, Num. xxiv; through Moses, Deut. xxxiii, 28; and also Isaiah xliii, 1; xliv, 1-2.

4. Announcements of Denunciation on Israel as a whole.
   Lev. xxvi, 33; Deut. xxviii, 25.

5. Announcements of Captivity of Israel as a whole.
   Isaiah v; Jer. ii, 7.

6. Announcements of Captivity of Israel (Northern) or "Ephraim."

1 Kings xiv, 15 ; Hosea v, 9 ; xiii, 16 ; Amos vi, 14 ; ix, 4.

7. Restoration. Announcements in which both nations are separately mentioned. (About twenty references.)

Isaiah xi, 12-13 ; li, 5 ; lxv, 8-10 ; Jer. iii, 18 ; v, 11 ; vii, 15 ; xii, 15 ; xxx, 3 ; xxxi, 27 ; xxxii, 30 ; xxxii, 41 ; xxxiii, 7 ; xxxiii, 24 ; l, 33 ; Ezek. xxxvii, ; Joel iii, 18-21 ; Hosea i, 11 ; Micah i, 5 ; Zech. ix, 13 ; x, 6.

8. Restoration. Announcements with reference to the Northern Kingdom only. (Over fifty references.)

Lev. xxvi, 44 ; Psalm xiv, 7 ; liii, 6 ; lxxxvi, 1 ; cvi, 47 ; cvii, 2 ; cxxvi, 4 ; 2 Chron. xxxiii, 8 ; Isaiah xi, 11-14 ; xi, 16 ; xiv, 1 ; xxvii, 6 ; xxxv, 3 ; xli, 11 ; xliii, 5-7 ; xlv, 1-14 ; xlviii, 20 ; xlix, 18-22 ; liv, 1-10 ; lvi, 8 ; lx, 10, 16, 22 ; lxi, 9 ; lxii, 1-4 ; lxii, 10 ; Jer. iii, 17 ; xiii, 16-17 ; xvi, 14 ; xxiii, 7-8 ; xxx, 10, 11 ; xxxi, 7, 10-11 *et seq.* ; xlvi, 27-28 ; l, 19, 34 ; Ezek. xi, 16-21 ; xx, 37-42 ; xxviii, 25 ; xxxiv, 13 ; xxxvii, 26-28 ; xxxix, 21-28 ; Joel iii, 17 ; Amos iv, 7, 8 ; also Chap. ix ; Hosea i, 10 ; viii, 8 ; xii, 1 ; Zech. ii, 8, 11 ; x, 8 ; xiii, 8 ; Obad. xvii, Micah iv, 6-8 ; v, 6-8 ; Zeph. iii, 9-10, 20.

From this mass of statement, various facts stand clearly out :

1. That though the prophets predict punishment upon Israel, they are much more concerned with Restoration than with Captivity.

2. That the statements of Restoration are so full

and glorious that there can be no doubt about it when it becomes an accomplished fact.

3. That the Restoration to Palestine under Nehemiah of that small fraction of Judah, "the Jew," after the Babylonian captivity, in no detail fits the picture given by the prophets.

4. That the prophets recognise the distinction between Israel and Judah, and have more to say about the return of Israel than about anything else.

(*Note*:—We have not given the references to the return of Judah as distinct from Israel, since our present concern was only Israel. The references to Judah alone are mostly references to the return of the broken fragment of 49,000 under Nehemiah from Babylon; in the ultimate restoration, which the prophets place in the "latter days," or Gospel dispensation, when Judah is mentioned it is always in closest association with Israel; and these we have dealt with under 7.)

5. That the nation Israel is evidently to be as everlasting as the throne of David. It must therefore be still in existence somewhere.

6. That the description given of Israel as it shall be in the latter days, though given through various mouths at various times, is so wonderful that it will be bound to strike the eye of the beholder as soon as the nation re-appears.

7. That this nation Israel, not "the Jew," is the nation which Jesus came to redeem.

8. That through the redemption of Israel, all nations shall see the glory of God, and shall desire to enter into His kingdom.

9. That the nation, chosen, was appointed to do

definite work ; being chosen, not for its own comfort or glory, but for the service of the world.

It may be well to add here a brief description of the nation Israel as the prophets see it in the "latter days." The "latter days" are, of course, the days "after Christ's First Coming and before His Second." The "Millennium" follows the close of the "Latter Days" or Gospel Age.

The prophets tell us that the Israel nation is to be great and powerful on land and sea ; that it is to be in possession of all the world's strategic points ; that it is to own the lion's share of the raw materials of the world, its gold and silver, coal and oil, its forests, crops and herds.

They look forward with keen expectation to a day when this nation shall spread to all the corners of the earth, more than Rome did, or Greece ; and they tell us that there shall spring from it other nations like itself, separate from, yet at the same time part of, their mother ; a nation, in fact, and a company of nations ; and this composite nation is to finance, police, develop and establish the world.

Israel is to be the chief nation of the world ; to break down warring factions ; to suffer no conquest ; for it is to dwell securely in a place of its own, an island territory specially prepared for it and given to it by God. No nation will be able successfully to oppose it, since its victories are to be won, not in its own might, but by the power of the Most High.

It will be a nation which will be first in accepting Christianity and foremost in spreading the Truth wherever man is found. It is to relieve those who are oppressed, to put an end to slavery, and to be a light

in the dark places of the earth. Its flag will be the centre to which other nations will look for guidance and round which they will gather for security. Wherever that flag is supreme will be wealth and prosperity, peace and fruitfulness.

It will, as other nations, have its national sins, and no light ones at that. Idolatrous and drunken, perfidious and forgetful, careless, blind and ignorant through its history, it will in the end repent and stand entire for the Will of God.

We learn, too, that in all the process of its development it is to be a blind nation, unconscious of its origin, its work and its destiny. Finally, most wonderful of all, and, as if to leave us in no doubt whatever as to what nation is referred to by the prophets, we learn that this mighty nation will commence its finest period of growth and glory at the end of the eighteenth century (1790 onwards); that it will be in close association with a "mighty people" sprung from the same stock (compare Jacob's promise to the children of Joseph) and that in 1917 it will be instrumental in turning the Turks out of Jerusalem.

What nation can this be? Take a sheet of paper and rule it off in double column. In the first, write in order (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . . ) the details of the description given by the prophets. In the next column write the names of nations which you know to fit that especial detail. Sometimes you will find many nations to suit; sometimes only one or two. Yet there will be only one nation which you will have to write EVERY TIME in the names column, fitting each detail from first to last, and that nation will be Great Britain.

This conclusion will at first sight seem too strange to be true, and our first instinct is to banish it imme-

diately to the realms of the fantastic; but before doing so let us stay a moment to think of the whole question logically.

That for almost 2,500 years there has been in existence a vast literature which thus describes Britain and the Empire is a great marvel. That Britain and the Empire should be and do exactly what the prophets tell us Israel was to be and do is a marvel of chance, unless the prophets were definitely inspired to describe the Britain that was yet to be. And that the Anglo-Saxon peoples, in a "fit of absence of mind," should have proceeded to develop, in the Empire, and the U.S.A., exactly such a nation as the prophets describe, and that in face of all the facts the Anglo-Saxon peoples are still blind and deaf to the origin of their Great Empire, would be a comedy of ignorance and stupidity, were it not so tragically pathetic.

The logic of it is simple; the facts plain, the conclusions obvious.

A. The prophets describe a nation which they call Israel.

B. The British Empire exactly fits that description, and no one else does.

C. THEREFORE, the British Empire IS Israel.

Or, again,

A. The British Empire is described in writings 2,000 years old.

B. Those writings are known as "The Bible."

C. THEREFORE, the Bible is British History written in advance.

Or, yet again,

A. The Bible describes God's purpose for the world, accomplished through one nation, Israel, known as "Chief of the Nations."

B. That "Chief of Nations" is Britain.

C. THEREFORE, God's purpose for the world can only be fulfilled through Britain.

## IF THIS BE TRUE, WHAT THEN?

1. We have learnt WHY the Nation is; God's Everlasting Purpose.

2. We have learnt WHAT the Nation is; the Peace and Security of the whole world, a blessing to all the nations.

3. We have learnt the Nation's DESTINY; invincible, ever-spreading, filling the face of the earth with fruit.

4. We have learnt the Nation's WORK in the world; to free the slaves, to enrich the desert places, to be God's witnesses.

## WHAT SHALL WE DO, THEN, SINCE THIS NATION IS BRITAIN?

1. We shall gratefully recognise our great inheritance in the Anglo-Saxon race; not only what we to-day call "British," but all those peoples of the Anglo-Saxon stock who make up the great Nation and Company of Nations.

2. We shall humbly take up our responsibilities, realising that we are not called for our own sakes, but for His; not for Glory, but for Service and Sacrifice.

3. We shall let none despise us, oppress us, or make

us afraid, conscious of the greatness of our high calling and the power of the Almighty to perform His purposes.

4. We shall reject our national sins and strengthen ourselves, by study, prayer and knowledge, for the work we are called to do in the world.

5. We shall try to make ourselves worthy to lead the world and bind ourselves into an invincible barrier against the enemies of the Empire, which is God's Everlasting Purpose, and of the Bible, which is His Eternal Word.

6. We shall strive to bring all nations under the peace and security of the shelter of God's Everlasting Purpose.

7. We shall, as individuals, pledge ourselves afresh to the service of the King, which is Christ Jesus our Lord, who shall yet "sit upon the throne of His father David, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

So be it, Lord, thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud Empires, pass away:
Thy Kingdom stands and grows for ever,
Till all the earth shall own thy sway.

## CHAPTER NINE

### "THE KING AT WORK"

We pass now to the consideration of Jesus Christ in His relationship to the Kingdom, as He manifested that relationship during His earthly pilgrimage. We know that the prophets expected a great King of Israel to appear at some time in the Israel history after the nation's captivities ; we have seen how the birth of Jesus was heralded as "The Coming of the King" ; we shall now see how large a place the concept of the Kingdom holds in the New Testament writings.

The very titles that are applied to Jesus from the commencement of His public ministry bear reference to His royal state ; for "Messiah," in Hebrew, means "Anointed," and "Christ," its Greek equivalent, has the same value. We have become so accustomed to the use of this latter word that it has become one of the "names" of Jesus, whereas it is really His official title in the Kingdom. To speak of Jesus *Christ* is equivalent to saying, Jesus the Anointed Heir to the Throne.

Those people, then, who speak of "the Christ Spirit through the ages" are convicted of a misapplication of the term. There have been many teachers in all ages and countries who have been sent by God ; there have been many who have been inspired by the Spirit of God ; there have been numerous "Illuminati" ; but there can only be one true "Christ," one real "heir to the throne," one only to "sit upon the throne of His father David, whose Kingdom shall have no end."

The very first to recognise the Kingship of Jesus was the one whom we should most expect to be ready for His coming, that is, the Devil. As "Prince of the Power of the Air" ; as Head of the "Principalities and Powers, the Rulers of the Darkness of this World," he was, of course, continually on the watch for just such an event as the prophesied "Coming of the King." Though to man, in the first ages of his creation, Satan suggested doubts of God's faithfulness ("Yea, hath God said . . . ?"), yet in his own mind he could never have had a doubt of the Purpose and Power of God. "The devils also believe and tremble"; and the Arch-fiend who once stood in the presence of God could never forget that "there shall be enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

It is perfectly certain that the Devil knew all about Israel ; we have evidence enough, in the story of that nation's history, of his innumerable attempts to overthrow the Everlasting Purpose. And now that the "Heir to the Throne" appears, it is not surprising to find that Satan follows Him into the silence of the wilderness, to endeavour to overthrow Him there before His public work commences.

It is the universal experience of mankind that Satan never wastes time or energy. He always tempts us at the point which most appeals to *us*. There are some men he never tempts to drunkenness, or to loose living, because he knows it would not appeal to them ; there are others he attacks in their mental processes, in spiritual pride, in financial matters, because he knows in each individual case what it is that interests most. Consequently, when he comes to

Jesus and shows Him "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," it is because he knows that Jesus' interest is centred there.

This is one of the first evidences of the reality of the Israel revelation that the King should come and take His authority and rule over the kingdoms of this world; for, otherwise, Satan would not have concerned himself with this question. Recognising the King, he offers Him, as he has the power to do, the governance of His kingdom on terms which, if accepted, will ruin the King for ever. Upon his failure, we read that "the devil left Him for a season"; only to come up again and again, as we shall see in due course.

So the King enters upon His ministry. At present we shall confine ourselves to His teaching, leaving His kingly deeds until later.

What was His message?

If we are to accept the latest findings of the scholars, that John's Gospel is the earliest, then the very first recorded conversation of Jesus, that with Andrew and another disciple, was such as to send Andrew to find his brother Simon, with the message "We have found the Messiah" (which is, being interpreted, the Christ, the Anointed, the Heir to the Throne). The second conversation, of which no details are given, was with Philip, who reported to Nathanael, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write." The third conversation, with Nathanael, brings the confession, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

We pass over the incident next reported, the Cleansing of the Temple, to deal with it later; and we

come to the fifth reported conversation, that with Nicodemus. Once more the topic seems to be "The Kingdom." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

What do these phrases mean, if the Kingdom He refers to is, as we have been arguing, earthly and visible ?

Surely it is perfectly clear ; a man may be in the Kingdom all his life and never *see* it ; unless he be born again, he will see only his own concerns and never think of God behind it all. He may by race be a citizen of the kingdom, but until he accepts the guidance of the Spirit, the rule and authority of the King, he is a rebel, a traitor, a blind and ignorant creature ; in other words, he has not "entered in."

It should be noticed in passing that we shall constantly have to refer to Jesus' use of the Old Testament, because it shows so clearly that the modern attempt to separate the Old Testament from the New not only has no foundation in Scripture, but actually undermines the whole setting and atmosphere, as well as the teaching, of Jesus.

An early instance of this use of the Old Testament to explain and illustrate His meaning is in John iii, 15, where we are told "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." A more extended use of the Old Testament follows in Chap. iv, in Jesus' conversation with the Woman of Samaria, where not only is "father Jacob" quoted, but where Jesus appeals to Isaiah's picture of the "latter days" and the Restoration of Israel, as He refutes the woman's query about wor-

ship in the words, "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father." The reference is to Isaiah ii, followed by Jer. xxxi, 34.

At His first public appearance in the Synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus selected, as the passage which best described His work, the words of Isaiah lxi, 1-2, the introduction to that wonderful series of chapters which are the announcement of the Kingdom and the peace and blessing which must follow "the day of vengeance of our God." The whole passage (Isaiah lxi-lxvi) deals with the Restoration of Israel, and in announcing "this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," Jesus definitely claimed to be the "Anointed One," the Messiah or Christ, and carried the thoughts of his hearers forward to the full consummation of the purpose of God.

In the sermon which followed, He quotes twice from Israel history, Elijah's being sent to minister to the widow of Zarephath, and Elisha's dealings with Naaman the Syrian; both of them illustrating how the grace of God is lost to those who are unworthy and given to those who wait for it, and both leading up to the later statement "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." That the listeners saw the implication of His remark was evidenced from the fact that they were filled with wrath and would have thrown Him from the hill-top. "But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way." (Luke iv, 16-30). One cannot help feeling that, if the hearers on that occasion had known as little of their Old Testament as do modern hearers, there would have been no reason for Jesus to have been endangered, for

His remarks would have had no meaning for them at all.

With the opening of His ministry in Capernaum, Matthew definitely connects the promise made to the Israel people in Isaiah ix. "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light" . . . ; the continuation of that passage being "Unto us a son is given . . . and the government shall be upon His shoulder . . . " Evidently, to Matthew, this was the actual "coming of the King" ; and his expectation was realised in the immediate message of Jesus, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven (or, of God) is at hand." (Matt. iv, 17.)

In Luke iv, 43, Jesus tells His disciples, "I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also : for therefore am I sent."

*Matt. iv*, 23. "And He went about in all Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom."

In healing the leper, Jesus insists that the healed man shall carry out the instructions of Moses ; He does not quote them, but presumes that all who hear Him will know to what He is referring ; as, of course, they did (Lev. xiv, 2, *ff.*; Matt. viii, 2-4 ; Mark i, 40-45 ; Luke v, 12-16).

When challenged for eating with publicans and sinners, Jesus turned the minds of the Pharisees to Hosea vi, 6 ; as He did also on another occasion. This part of the writing of Hosea is a section of the appeal of Jehovah to the Israel nation.

*Hos. vi*, 6. "I will have [desire] mercy and not sacrifice."

The discourse to the Jews in John v, is very largely made up of references to the Old Testament writings.

*Verse* 28. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done ill unto the Resurrection of Damnation."

This is distinctly Daniel's message in xii, 2.

*Dan. xii*, 2. "At that time many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall wake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Continuing the discourse in Chap. v:

*Verse* 39. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me."

*Verse* 46. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Here Jesus claims for Moses not only the "art of writing," which the modern critics claim to have been much later than Moses' time, but also the authorship of the books which bear his name, on which question the scholars have been very pronounced in their decision that it is not possible for Moses to have written them. The question still remains, "if they believe not Moses, how can they believe" Jesus?

On the question of the Sabbath, Jesus quotes David's attitude, and the activities of the priests in the Temple, and again "Mercy and not Sacrifice," all in such a way as again to presume both His and their knowledge of, and belief in, the Old Testament.

In the Sermon on the Mount, there is much more of

the Old Testament than we have sometimes realised. Even the Beatitudes are largely quotation, as, for example, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Isaiah lxvi, 2); "Blessed are they that mourn" (Isaiah lxi, 2-3); "Blessed are the meek" (Psalm xxxvii, 11); "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst . . ." (Isaiah lv, 1-2).

"Rejoice, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (See 1 Kings xix, 10; 2 Chron. xxiv, 19-21; Jer. xxvi, 20-23.)

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfil. For, verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law till all things be accomplished."

Then follow a series of extracts from the Law, intensified and filled up by the greater searching of Christ's spirit, which does not make them lighter, but more serious.

Even the exhortation, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," which has been so often quoted as being distinctly Jesus' own special contribution to Truth, is taken from Prov. xxv, 21; "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."

"Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance . . ."

*Isaiah lviii*, 5. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down the head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Is not this the fast I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring

the poor that are cast out to thy house ? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ?"

Was not this in Jesus' mind, and in the mind of His hearers, when He said :

*Luke xiv*, 12-13. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends . . . but call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind . . . "

*Matt. xxv*, 34-46. "I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat . . . a stranger and ye took me not in . . . naked, and ye clothed me not . . . "

To John the Baptist, sending from prison to ask, "Art thou He that cometh or look we for another?" Jesus refers back to Isaiah where the reference is entirely to Kingdom blessings.

*Isaiah xxxv*, 5-6. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped ; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing . . . "

Referring to John, Jesus claims him both as the divine messenger and as Elijah, mentioned in Malachi.

*Mal. iii*, 1. "Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me."

*Mal. iv*, 5. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

To those who demanded a sign, Jesus gave both Jonah and the Queen of Sheba ; these two Old Testament characters rising up in judgment against that generation, of which should be required "the blood of all the prophets from Abel to Zechariah."

*Luke xii*, 49. "I am come to cast fire in the earth."

The reference is evidently again to the coming of the Divine Messenger, followed by the Lord Himself.

*Mal. iii*, 2. "But who shall abide the day of His coming ; for He is like a refiner's fire."

Thus, with historic allusion, prophetic reference, and national atmosphere and setting, "He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God" (Luke viii, 1).

After He had healed the man blind and dumb, all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Is not this the son of David ?" in other words, the heir to David's throne ? (Matt. xii, 23).

And Jesus said, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit (or, finger) of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. xii, 28 ; Luke xi, 20).

A very large proportion of Jesus' teaching was in the form of parables, the reason given for this form of presentation being in the word which Isaiah directed against the House of Judah (Matt. xiii, 14).

*Isaiah vi*, 9-10. "Hear ye, indeed, but understand not ; and see ye, indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they . . . convert and be healed."

With the parables as part of the Gospel of the Kingdom we have not space fully to deal, but a few suggestions may be made, to lead to further meditations.

*The Barren Fig Tree* (*Luke xiii*, 6-9). A picture of the nation Israel and God's patience towards it. Hope is still held out. "These three years have I come seeking fruit and finding none." Compare Hosea vi, 1 :

"After two days he will revive us ; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

*The Sower* (*Matt. xiii*, 1-9). The seed, says Jesus, is the word of the Kingdom ; with its varied reception in the hearts of men.

*Wheat and Tares* (*Matt. xiii*, 24-30). The wheat is the sons of the Kingdom ; the tares are the sons of evil.

*The Seed growing secretly* (*Mark iv*, 26-29). The Kingdom of Israel is lost to sight ; it grows none the less into its full fruition.

*The "Mustard" Seed* (*Matt. xiii*, 31). From tiniest imaginable, the Kingdom grows until it overshadows the earth, protecting even the outside nations.

*The Leaven* (*Matt. xiii*, 33). Not in its "evil", but in its "permeating" influence throughout the world, secret but invincible.

*Hidden Treasure* (*Matt. xiii*, 44). Precious, but out of sight, is the Kingdom.

*Pearl.* More precious than any other Kingdom.

*Net.* There are good and bad in the Kingdom. (Note :—Not in "the Church," surely ?).

Thus Jesus taught ; and for this work He chose and trained His disciples, with a special intensive and secret knowledge which others do not receive.

*Matt. x*, 5-6, 23. "These twelve Jesus sent forth . . . saying, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not ; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand . . . Verily, I say unto you, Ye shall not have

gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.' "

In Matt. xv, Jesus makes the categorical statement, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the great confession of Peter's faith on which so much controversy has turned in the Christian Church. The actual faith of Peter, on which Jesus said He would build His Church, should be noted. "Thou art the Christ." This is the confession of Jesus as being "the Anointed One," the heir to the throne ; and it is the one statement on which all three recorders are agreed.

Matthew alone carries it further, and records the saying of Jesus "On this rock I will build my Church." What connection this statement had, if any, with the Old Testament conception of the "Stone Kingdom" must be left to the research, imagination, or ingenuity of the student ; it must only be noted here that the "keys" given to Peter were not the keys of a "Church," but those of a *Kingdom*. Is it on this interpretation that those who claim succession from Peter in this matter have developed so vast a *political* organisation, and make such claims for "Temporal Power " ?

*Matt. xvi*, 14-20. "Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' And Jesus answered and said unto him . . . 'That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . . and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . . ' "

We next come to an amazing statement which has led to a great deal of difficulty, even leading some learned and earnest students of the Word to say that

Jesus Himself was mistaken in expecting a speedy Consummation of the Age which never eventuated. Whatever else the statement may mean, we know that it could not mean that; that any *mistake* could not be a mistake of our Lord, but only of ourselves in our attempts to interpret Him.

"There be some of them that stand here that shall in nowise taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God (come with power, Mark ix, 1; the 'Son of Man coming in His Kingdom,' Matt. xvi, 28) *Luke ix*, 27.

The emphasis here is on the Kingdom and its coming, and not, obviously, on the coming of the Son of Man in Judgment at the End of the Age. Not only here, but in Matt. xxiv also, Jesus deals with two events, (1) the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; (2) the Coming of the King at the End of the Age.

In what sense the Destruction of Jerusalem can be said to be the Coming of the Kingdom may begin to be understood if we realise first of all the truth which Jesus declared to the Jew, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." So long as Jerusalem remained undisturbed, and was the centre of all ideas of national aggrandisement, of Kingship and the Kingdom, so long could not the real "Coming of the Kingdom" be said to have commenced. So long as the world could see the city of David standing unmolested, so long would their minds dwell there, and there only; and the Kingdom of God must remain for ever an unrealised fact.

But with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the scattering all over the world, not only of the "Jews," but of all hopes in connection with the city itself;

with the "decentralisation," so to speak, of the ideas of the Kingdom, it might of truth be said that the way was clear for the manifestation of the real kingdom, the Kingdom of God.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"; thus the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, which "some of them that stood by" certainly "saw," was a trumpet blast to call men's minds in another direction for the fulfilling of the purpose of God. It was, in fact, the very "Coming of the Kingdom," which was to grow and fill the whole earth until, in the fulness of time, that same kingdom should deliver Jerusalem again from the Gentile hands.

Of that later deliverance of Jerusalem which should be the final preparation for the Coming of the King Himself, Dr. Grattan Guiness forty odd years ago declared that "the deliverance of Jerusalem from the hands of the alien, and its deliverance by the Kingdom Israel, which is due to take place in A.D. 1917, will be a trumpet blast which will wake the Christian Church to a realisation of the truth of the Everlasting Purpose of God." (This is not an exact quotation, but it contains the essence of Dr. Guiness' statement.)

The event has proved the correctness of Grattan Guiness' studies, though not, alas, of his understanding of the state of the Churches in A.D. 1917, when Jerusalem was delivered from Gentile hands, and by—Britain. The slumber which holds us was too deep and sound to hear even that trumpet blast; we await a further and louder one ere long.

*Abraham and Christ* (*John viii*, 33).

The Jews claimed to be Abraham's seed, which, of

course, racially they were and are, though they are only a very small fragment thereof. Jesus admits their *racial* descent. "I know," he said, "that ye be Abraham's *seed*; . . . if ye were Abraham's *children*, ye would do the works of Abraham . . . but now ye seek to kill me. This did not Abraham . . . Ye are of your father the Devil . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad . . . Before Abraham was, I am."

The distinction between Abraham's *seed* and Abraham's *children* is clear. Though by racial descent they came from Abraham, they did not belong to him, since they had neither Abraham's faith, nor did his works. No man can build upon racial descent *alone*; and no man, whatever his race, can be excluded from the family of Abraham, if he accepts the position which Abraham took up. In other words, "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The corollary of this must perforce be pointed out. There are many who claim, on their Christian faith alone, to be "Abraham's seed." "Abraham's seed," they say, "are the Believers in Christ." This is simply not true. The true children of Abraham are those, and those only, who have Abraham's *faith*. "Abraham believed God"; if you are his seed, you must believe God, as he did; that is, you will accept the promises of God in the national, as well as in the individual, sense; you will believe in the perpetual existence of the Israel nation (not "the Jew"); you will believe that God means what He says; and you will accept the Bible as His word.

"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to . . . discredit

the authority of the Bible ? refuse to believe in the Coming of the King ? ridicule the Israel people who are God's Nation ? This did not Abraham." One does not care to go on, with the strength which Jesus manifested, "Ye are of your father the Devil . . . " ; yet the fact remains, that Abraham believed God, and we do NOT ; so how can we claim to be even of the "spiritual seed of Abraham" ?

That Jesus should claim for Abraham that "he saw my day and was glad" suggests that a fuller revelation was given to Abraham of the inner meaning of God's purpose than is recorded in the Scriptures; though, perhaps, we might find a valuable suggestion in the remark of the Almighty in the matter of the proposed destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah ; "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that he shall become a great and mighty nation"? If the smaller revelation, why not the greater ?

*The Good Shepherd* (*John x*, 4-21). The picture of the Sheep and the Shepherd is, throughout the Old Testament, used of the Israel nation and of *no one else*. (So also is The Vine, John xv.) Consequently the Jews who listened to this discourse must have realised the claim that Jesus was making for Himself. This puts a fresh meaning into "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and they shall become one flock, and one shepherd."

By way of contrast with what Jesus says of Himself in this connection, the Lord's description of the Shepherds of Israel in Ezek. xxxiv and xxxvii should be read.

When Jesus continued more forcefully yet, "Ye

believe not, because *ye are not my sheep*," one is not surprised that the Jews took up stones to stone Him. "The Kingdom of God is taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

### Further Parables.

Certain of Jesus' parables must have seemed to the Jews to have been too directly aimed against them.

*The Prodigal Son* (*Luke xv*, 11-32). The two sons are the two nations of Judah and Israel. Israel leaves home and loses all; Judah remains behind, has the opportunity of all, but sees none of her blessings. When Israel is found and restored, Judah, as always, objects.

*Dives and Lazarus* (*Luke xvi*, 19-31). Judah, with all her privileges and blessings, has none to spare for Israel at her gates. The day comes when Israel is received into "Abraham's bosom," entering into the covenant blessings of Abraham, the kingdom and inheritance; whereupon Judah desires some message to be sent to her own people. Jesus says, "They have Moses and the Prophets . . . if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead." (Is this true of to-day?)

"There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and yourselves thrust out" (Luke xiii, 28).

*The Great Supper* (*Luke xiv*, 7-24). The parable is introduced with the exact parallel to Prov. xxv: "Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king and stand not in the place of great men. For better it is that it be said unto thee, 'Come up hither,' than

that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen."

The parable itself is directed once more against those "Jews" who were rejecting the kingdom. "None of them which were bidden shall taste of my supper." "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you . . . "

So also the parables of the Publican, the Labourers in the Vineyard, the Ten Pounds, all speak against those who, having all, do nothing but pride themselves on their position ; while Israel, having nothing, enters in.

The parables of the Wicked Husbandmen, the Ten Virgins, the Five Talents, the Sheep and the Goats, are all pictures of the Coming of the King. It should be noted especially that in the last of these parables it is "nations" that are gathered around the throne ; this is not a picture of individual judgment.

Can we be surprised that "when the Chief Priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them" ?

The events of the last week of our Lord's life will be dealt with later, so we may proceed to a summing up of the teaching as far as we have gone.

1. The whole of Jesus' teaching is steeped in Old Testament phrase, atmosphere, circumstance, and illustration.

2. Jesus declares Himself to have come "for the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

3. He sends His disciples to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel." "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man be come."

4. He definitely declares to the Jews that "the

kingdom of God is taken from you and given to a NATION bringing forth the fruits thereof."

5. His parables emphasise the same truth.

6. He seems to have instructed His disciples in the secrets of the kingdom as He did not instruct others ; as was natural if they were to be heralds of the kingdom.

7. We gather from the story of the walk to Emmaus, in Luke xxiv, that right up to the end of Jesus' life, the disciples were expecting some manifestation of the Redemption of Israel, the Nation. "We trusted," they said, "that it had been He who would have redeemed Israel." And Jesus, not denying or correcting their misapprehension—if such it was—"beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." If their conception of His teaching concerning Israel was still wrong, at that late stage of their experience, would He not openly have declared it? The Spirit of God would have taken special pains that later generations, at least, should labour under no such misunderstanding.

8. Even right up to the time of the Ascension the disciples were concerning themselves with this very question of the Restoration of Israel. When the last farewells were being said, when only one opportunity remained for receiving a last word of advice, the only question they are reported to have asked was "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel" ?

Now, if ever, was Jesus' last great chance to put them right, if they were labouring under any mistaken notions of His message. If there *were* really no Israel nation to be restored, He would certainly have

told them so then, if not before. If they had been putting a material interpretation on what He meant them to take spiritually, now, in His very last moments of bodily presence with them, He will certainly correct once for all their errors.

But He did nothing of the sort. Instead, He said "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own hand ; . . . ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

"And when He had spoken these things, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And . . . behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ?

"THIS SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen Him go into heaven'."

## CHAPTER TEN

### "THE KING AND THE USURPER"

Our study of the Gospel of the Kingdom, so far as we have been able to trace it from the Scriptures themselves, has shewn us, surely, that there is more in the work of Jesus Christ than the declaration of "Our glorious social gospel," which has been the 'beau ideal' of many students of the Word; more even than the gospel of personal salvation on which most of our emphasis has been placed.

The social teaching of Jesus, opposed though it was to the ideas of His age, would never have brought Him to the Cross. Even His religious teaching, though cutting closer into the roots of life, would have created no more than a violent opposition in the minds of the church leaders of His day. Had it not been for a deeper underlying reality, a forcefulness in spiritual matters, a certain inevitableness of triumph within the secret places of the souls of men, the teaching of Jesus would have ranked as perhaps the highest of all the systems of religious thought throughout the ages; but it would not have fulfilled the purpose of God, nor would it have resulted in the salvation of the world. For the world cannot be saved by a doctrine, a system of thought, a social creed, however exalted they may be; it can only be saved by a person; and it is in the mystery of the person of Christ that we have to seek the solution of the problem of His triumph.

Is it not true that the greatest controversies of the church have raged round this very question of the person of Christ? Is it not equally true that it is on

the question of their personal relation to Christ that men stand or fall in spiritual things ? However much we intellectually agree with His moral or religious teaching, sooner or later every man is brought face to face with the person of Christ Himself, and the pressing question becomes, not "What do you believe ?" nor "What are your religious activities ?" but, "What think ye of Christ ?"

That the Master Himself fully realised the importance of His own personality is evidenced by that use of the personal pronoun "I," which is so pronounced a feature of His public utterances. It is true that there was never a quieter, less blatant, teacher of humanity than Jesus ; it is equally true that there has never been a more majestic, more confident, and more insistent figure in the history of the world. From that first utterance of His childhood's days, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business," to that last supremely confident promise, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," there is no faltering in His consciousness of being unique both in His relation to God and to Man. Even that bitter cry *in extremis* "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" reveals that factor in Him which, for want of a better term, we call the consciousness of His own personality.

Study the "I" utterances of Jesus Christ, and you are inevitably led to see that He at least was certain that He came to do a special work in a special way, and that He had a special relationship to God in doing it.

"*I* am come that they might have life."

"Come unto ME, all ye that are weary, and *I* will give you rest."

"*I* came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

"*I* am the Resurrection and the Life."

"*I*, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto *Me*."

"I lay down my life *of myself; I* have power to lay it down, and power to take it again."

So one might go on to find innumerable examples of this self-consciousness of Jesus.

Yet with it all, there is no egotism; for, in all His speaking, the sense of God, the sense of His mission, the sense of unavoidable conflict, sounds continuously.

It is in this realm, on the ground of His person and work, that the real opposition to Jesus revealed itself. On His own showing—for who else could have given us the story?—it was in these deeper regions of His person and work that the enemy first attacked Him. It was on a parallel line, running beneath the more visible social and political activity of His public ministry, that the religious conflict was fought out. It was in the same deep regions of the soul that His own friends and admirers were used of Satan to turn Him from His purpose and frustrate His work.

For it was here that the real battle was to be fought, here where spiritual forces were ranged one against another; it was here that His strength was proved to be supreme, so that even Satan had to acknowledge His supremacy and recognise in Him the inevitable King.

It is in an attempt to realise something of this hidden conflict that we come to a study of the endeavours that were made to turn Christ from His purpose; and it is in realising how completely He conquered in these secret places that we come to

recognise in the earthly Jesus that Heavenly King also, who "through death overcame Him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil."

"I beheld Satan fall as lightning from Heaven," said Jesus in one of His moments of spiritual ecstasy ; and He was giving voice to a consciousness which was not of the moment merely, but which was the constant experience of His inner life.

*The Battle in the Wilderness* (*Matt. iv*, 1-11).

With the very first appearance of Jesus in public the attack on His principles commenced, with that strange experience in the Wilderness which has come to be known as "The Temptation."

So dramatic is the account, and so vividly has it held the imagination that we have almost come to regard it as the sole incident of the kind in His career. Yet we shall find that the opposition there typified continued right to the end, and that Jesus was never really free from the suggestions that were first made to Him in that supreme experience.

It must be remembered that Jesus came to this first great conflict with Satan not unprepared to meet and to conquer all the arguments that were brought against Him. Thirty years of observance and study, with a definite sense of His call and the conditions on which must be established the Kingdom He had come to claim, had led Him to see clearly the issues that were before Him ; while His close relationship to God the Father, and His submission to the Divine will and purpose, now ratified by that Father's express approval in His baptismal experience, were to Him a sure defence in the trying ordeal.

Though, in the form of the story, the temptation falls under three heads, it may be clearly seen that there is one idea running through them all. The great principle of the Kingdom of Satan is emphasised in threefold guise. SELF is the epitome of that kingdom ; selflessness of this. On this point alone the conflict will be fought out. The representative of God must be turned from His proposed pathway of self-sacrificing love, and be persuaded to make His appeal to men on grounds more consonant with the principle of His adversary. "Save thyself—Manifest thyself—Crown thyself," is the appeal of the enemy ; "GOD—first, last, and all the time" is the unwavering response that it meets.

### SPARE THYSELF.

"If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Not only does Jesus go without food, as here, in times of great spiritual exertion, but also, as we see in John's Gospel, He forgets to eat under the stress of human need. There is meat for Him, actual physical nourishment, in His meeting with the woman of Samaria, just as, He declares, there is food for Him in His intimate relationship with His Father God.

That anyone can be so given up to a spiritual ideal as to forget his own needs and go hungry is a contradiction of the Satanic philosophy. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." There is no room in Satan's realm for the sacrificial, whether in meditation or in service. "Spare thyself," is his cry and the cry of all his followers. For them the whole of life must be made easy ; there must be no "doing without." If Jesus is the Son of God, He need not,

and therefore He must not be allowed to, suffer any shortage in His human requirements. If Satan can persuade Jesus to make a bid for His own personal comfort in His ministry among men, he has gained his point immediately. The Path of Sacrifice cannot be opened by one who has not Himself been willing to tread it.

The appeal is a deep one, to the ordinary human needs of the Man Himself. Yet Jesus makes a sure reply, and at an even deeper level, with the reminder that there are things more vital than comfort; that there are times when hunger is preferable to satisfaction; that communion with God, and the faithful performance of His will, are more fitted to a man than any outward fulness can be. If Jesus is to be spared any pain or sacrifice, it will not be of His own will or choice. All these things, both now and throughout His whole life, are the concern solely of His Father.

### Manifest Thyself.

So, too, with the second suggestion. "If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down." If Jesus is to be recognised as the Messiah, as He hopes to be, He must commend Himself to the Jewish people in a way that they will understand. Their expectation has been for a Messiah who will suddenly appear as on the clouds of heaven. He will descend upon the Holy Place and establish His rule among the chosen people. "Here then," says Satan, "is thy great opportunity. We stand upon a pinnacle of the Temple. Below us is the busy crowd in the courtyard. Manifest thyself to them as they expect thee to do. Fling thyself down. There can be no harm for thee therein,

for thou hast the protection of God ; but the effect will be all that thou canst wish. By one majestic coup thou wilt have accomplished thy mission ; they will receive thee at once as their expected Deliverer, and will crown thee King."

But Jesus knew that there was more in His mission than an immediate manifestation of majesty and power. He was to represent, and teach men to see, the Nation which was God's everlasting purpose, and Himself as King of that Nation. Not through supernal power or magic splendour would men learn the lesson ; but by a living of the life which is characteristic of God's Servant Nation would men themselves be drawn into that eternal purpose which was in the bosom of the Father. "Manifest thyself," the Tempter says, "in some supreme fashion which will command their notice and respect." Jesus replies, "I will manifest myself in God's way and in His own time, neither presuming on His guardian care nor pre-dating His purposes ; but by a calm and placid following out of His will day by day. I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

### Crown Thyself.

"And the Kingship ?" continues the Adversary. "Thou hast in mind the throne of David, the Kingship of Israel, and ultimate rule over all nations and tribes and tongues. Look at them as they spread out before thy mind's eye. Know—thou dost already know—that all the nations belong to me. Their peoples follow my law of self ; their governments are built upon my principles. I have held them all these years. Thou wouldest be King ? Take, then, these kingdoms of the world ; but thou canst rule

them only on the same principles. Embrace what I stand for, self and splendour and might, and thou shalt be king indeed."

"There is a higher law than thine," replies the Master. "It is the law of God. He is supreme, even over thee. His principles will stand when thine are scattered unto dust. And thou, thou too, shalt come to bow beneath His feet. Thou too shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. A throne indeed I seek ; but it is His throne, not thine. Its strength is love, not self ; service, not splendour ; right, not might. There can be but one ruler in this universe ; and that ruler is God."

The answer is complete and final. Here, at the outset of His public work, the Christ has faced the temptations that come to all who follow their Lord. There is a primrose path of ease where man may rest in peace ; and where without much pain he may achieve his heart's desire. There is a spectacular publicity which will bring fame and glory from the unthinking crowds. There is a loyalty to earthly standards which will enthrone one as a popular idol. But these things are not of God, nor do they lead to the Throne of God.

The path may lead through suffering, through despisal, or through death ; but the Master is prepared. He marches straight on, the inevitable King, to His throne in the nations of the world and in the hearts of men.

*The Battle in the Inner Circle.*

If Satan retires worsted from the field where he has attacked the principles on which Christ is building, he only withdraws strategically, and not finally

vanquished. In recalling these early experiences to His disciples, Jesus adds the significant remark "Then the devil leaveth Him—for a season," but only for a season. There is no more freedom from Satan's wiles for Jesus than there is for any of His followers; and at no time is the Tempter more subtle or more dangerous than when he hides himself behind the personality of our intimate friends.

Once again the attack is launched, more forcibly this time than before, upon the same three points which were previously in question. So close indeed is the parallel that we can almost hear the voice of the Tempter in each case as it sounded first in the wilderness encounter.

### Spare Thyself (*Matt. xvi*, 13-23).

Jesus has been taking the opportunity, after Peter's great confession of faith, to prepare the minds of the disciples for what must seem to them an unnecessarily distressing state of affairs. "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must . . . suffer many things . . . and be killed . . . "

The words fall like a thunderbolt upon their newborn visions. That He whom they have already learnt to love, and are coming to recognise as the Son of God, the anointed heir to the throne, should suffer and die—this cannot be true.

"This be far from Thee, Lord. Pity Thyself; spare Thyself. There is surely a better way than this. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou canst not go down into the deeps of human sorrow, nor suffer the pains of an agonising death. These things consort not with Thy majesty. 'If Thou be the Son

of God,' one hears the whisper once again, 'command that these stones become bread.' "

"Get thee behind me, Satan. I have told thee once, I tell thee again ; thou regardest these things from the earthly standpoint, not from the heavenly. God's purposes are higher than thou canst interpret. Man does not live by bread alone. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work."

There are things more vital than comfort ; and the path of sacrifice cannot be opened by one who has not Himself been willing to tread it. If Jesus is to be spared any pain or sacrifice, it will not be of His own will or choice. All these things, both now and throughout His whole life, are the concern solely of His Father.

### Manifest Thyself (*John vii*, 1-9).

At a later stage it seemed necessary to Jesus that He should withdraw from Judæa and hide Himself in the more secluded regions of Galilee. This seclusion was a difficulty to His brethren, who felt that the presence of Jesus in Judæa was an urgent necessity. Popular feeling was running high in the capital. To-day the crowd shouted for Jesus ; to-morrow they would shout for the chief priests. "Thou art wasting Thy opportunities here. Go down to the people ; manifest Thyself to them as they expect. Ride into Thy kingdom on the crest of a wave of popular feeling, and declare Thyself Head of the Nation."

"If thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence. By one majestic coup Thou wilt have accomplished Thy mission ; they ... will crown Thee King."

But the throne of Jesus is not founded upon a

popular cry or the chance approval of an excited mob. There must be personal and individual allegiance, a faithfulness that crowns Him King when all men are against Him. Jesus can afford to wait the full time. "My time is not yet come," He tells those who would hasten Him to the consummation of His and their destinies. When the Father's time has come, there will be no further hesitation.

### Crown Thyself (*John vi*, 1-15).

Jesus maintains the same attitude of unruffled calm in the stress of popular frenzy, where Satan again urges Him to the acceptance of that kind of a Kingdom which he offered Him in the desert solitudes. The crowds have been wondrously fed by the loaves and fishes. There is prospect in the Kingdom of God of plenty to eat, by the simple fiat of His will.

But the attempt to accomplish forcibly what Satan could not bring about by specious argument fails completely. "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take Him by force, and make Him king, withdrew." He was king already, through no submission to Satan, no yielding to popular clamour, but through Divine Right, and in unison with His Father, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

How His friends would have ruined, had He let them, all for which His kingdom stood. How emphatically they declare for Satan's principles, self and splendour and might. But for Jesus, now as formerly, there is no way of ease and comfort, no spectacular display, no popular enthronement.

The path may lead through suffering or despisal, or through death; but the Master is prepared. He

marches straight on, the inevitable King, to His throne in the nations of the world and in the hearts of men.

*The Battle with the Chief Priests.*

The same inflexible attitude to all that was in opposition to Him is manifested in Jesus as He carries the war into the enemy's camp. There is the same emphasis on spiritual principles, the same forgetting of self, the same intentness on the will of God.

Spare Thyself (*Mark xi*, 15-18).

Satan's principle of self-preservation, the pursuit of comfort, the amassing of wealth, was very evident in the highest religious circles of the day. Christ's most fierce invectives were hurled against the men who would fain represent the religion of God while caring supremely for themselves. He attacked covetousness in the very citadel of religion when He set His face against the bartering that went on in the Temple precincts.

There was no need, from the earthly view-point, for Him to run counter to accepted custom and beard the vested interests of Annas' own family. "Avoid such a contretemps," policy dictated; "do not expose Thyself to the inevitable hatred which a public defiance will arouse. Spare Thyself here at least; and, where Thou canst not approve, find safety in silence."

And for answer,

"He entered into the Temple and began to cast out them that sold . . . and overthrew the tables of the money-changers. . . And He said unto them, 'Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer? But ye have made it a den of robbers.'"

There is no sparing Himself here, no cowardly compromise for comfort's sake. Annas may be responsible, or any other man ; the family wealth may have been gathered in the very House of God ; but for all these things Jesus cared nothing. The honour of His Father's House was at stake, and all else is forgotten. Opposition here may mean sacrifice, persecution, or death, but Jesus does not hesitate. There are things more vital than comfort, and the Path of Sacrifice can not be opened by One who has not Himself been willing to tread it. If Jesus is to be spared any pain or sacrifice, it will not be of His own will or choice. All these things, both now and throughout His whole life, are the concern of His Father.

MANIFEST THYSELF (*John vi*, 30).

" 'What doest thou for a sign,' asked the people, 'that we may see and believe on thee ?' "

Once again comes the opportunity, by an instantaneous manifestation of His heavenly powers, to silence the cavillers and win the suffrage of the enquiring crowds. All are ready, eager, to see Him break forth in unearthly fashion before their eyes. The slightest spark would have started a conflagration which neither priests nor Empire could have subdued.

"Manifest Thyself to the people as they hope and expect, and insurrection will immediately follow. Jesus of Nazareth will at once become the leader who shall free His people from the Roman yoke."

But His work lay not along these lines. The yoke from which He was to free His people was not the yoke of Rome, but the yoke of Satan himself. No manifestation of power could break that chain ; only

the revelation of a Father's Holy-Love, the saving outreach of God after man, even if it meant death at last, could free them from their sins. And their Saviour must be one like themselves, buffeted and beaten down by stress of circumstance, even as they. Though He had at His disposal, for the mere asking, "more than twelve legions of angels," how then could the will of God be carried out, that "through death He should overcome him that hath the power of death" ?

And quietly, determinedly, Jesus lays on one side, one after another, the opportunities for self-glorification which would have hidden God from men's eyes and frustrated His eternal purpose. His time is not yet ; when God's time has come there will be no further hesitation.

### Crown Thyself (*Matt. xxvii*, 42).

"He is the King of Israel. Let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe on Him."

The triumph of Annas and Caiaphas is complete. At last Jesus has met His just reward and Satan has triumphed. "The conflict is over. He wanted to be King of Israel. On our terms, and on no other, he could have been even that. Grant even that he was right, and that he really was the Son of God, the Anointed One, the Heir to the Throne. It is not even yet too late. Let Him come down from the Cross, while the breath is still in the poor battered body, and we will believe on him."

But the sufferer makes no response. He is concerned with greater issues. Around Him are the signs of shame, the wooden crosses, the Roman legionaries,

the jeering crowds. The fight has been long and arduous, but—this is the end.

A groan, a cry—the soothing of His agonies with a sponge dipped in vinegar. "Crown Thyself, thou Son of God," cry the passers-by in cruel irony. And before them all—in the midst of His mortal agony—He lifts up His voice and cries, "It is finished."

The King is crowned ! The mortal spirit, no longer required for His warfare, He renders up of His own will to the Father.

The path may lead through suffering or despisal, or through death itself, but the Master is prepared. He marches straight on, the inevitable King, to His throne in the nations of the world and in the hearts of men.

*The Battle in Eternity.*

We have tried to show how, through all the opposition of devils and of men, the human Jesus passed unflinching to His final purpose as the Christ of God.

One cannot read the story without realising that there was more than humanity at work within the Highest of our race. There was in fact more even than a Divine afflatus working in Him. Here was eternity telescoped into time, infinity compassed by humanity. They will misread Jesus Christ who do not see in Him "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." They will misread the Gospel story if they do not see in it the working out on the stage of history that which was eternal in the nature of God Himself. Not only must all the promises and covenants of God be fulfilled, in the national redemption of Israel ; the salvation of humanity as a whole has to be accom-

plished in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; not as an afterthought, but as part of the make-up of the universe, the essence of the Creator Himself.

So the warfare at which we have glanced, as it was waged in Palestine two thousand years ago, and as it worked out on the surface of human life, is a warfare that has always been going on, and is working out still, in those deep places of the spiritual realm which only manifest themselves in occasional irruptions into human experience.

In it all, and through it all, in the realm of spirituality, the one fact is that HE REIGNS; and "He must reign until He hath brought all enemies under His feet." Through all opposition of devils or of men, through pathways it may be of suffering or despisal, through the gateway of death itself, He marches straight on, the inevitable King, to His throne in the nations of the world and in the hearts of men.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### "THE CHALLENGE OF THE KING"

### (*a*) *The Pocket of Annas*

THE conception of Jesus as the gentle and yielding, long-suffering and pacific Teacher does not square with the account given in the Gospels of the way in which He dealt with the situation which He found in the Palestine of His day, especially in the persons of Annas and Caiaphas, the heads of the religious life of the nation.

The ever-present factor in the mind of the Jewish patriot, at the time when Jesus came, was the Roman Empire. The very presence of the legionaries of Rome in the precincts of the Holy City was an offence to the pious Jew; the position of dependence upon Rome in things temporal was a thorn in the side of the ambitious; while the exactions of Rome upon the populace, for the upkeep of Palestine as a "colonia" within the Empire, found an outlet in the popular hatred of the tax-gatherers and an echo in the question with which the Jews tried to entangle Jesus in political controversy, as to whether they ought to pay tribute to Caesar or not.

In these circumstances of political dependence, religious fanaticism and patriotic zeal, it is not surprising that the expectations of the Coming of the Messiah who had been promised by the prophets should take the form of awaiting a political uprising under a great national leader who should drive the Romans headlong into the sea. There had always been a party in the state ready to fall in behind any

popular movement of the kind ; recollections of the Maccabean heroisms were still fresh in the minds of the people ; and the party known as "Zealots" made it their business to keep active in the national life an undercurrent of feeling, ready to burst out at any moment and to follow to the death anyone who would direct it against their Roman suzerains.

It may easily be realised that in such a tense atmosphere of political feeling, the figure of John the Baptist suddenly appearing from the solitudes of the Wilderness of Judea, clad in skins and feeding on locusts and wild honey, must have come as a spark on dry tinder. That ebullition of popular excitement which was roused by his astounding message, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand," took multitudes to John at the Jordan and led them to prepare for anything that might happen, by confessing their sins and being baptised in the waters of the river. At last, "The Day" had come ; they must make themselves ready ! But where was the leader they expected, for John was evidently but His herald ?

It is clear from the Gospel story that, from the very commencement, the official life of the nation took cognisance of what was going on down by the river Jordan ; their representatives were present at all the public utterances of John, the priests and Levites representing the religious leaders Annas and Caiaphas, the soldiers acting for the Roman authorities.

The religious leaders desired to know clearly what relation John bore to the coming Revolution. "Art thou Elijah ?" for they had read that Elijah must first come. "And he answered, No." "Art thou that prophet ?" for Moses had written, "A prophet shall

the Lord thy God raise up unto you, like unto me." "And he answered, No."

"Art thou the Messiah ? The Anointed ?"

"And he confessed and denied not, 'I am not the Christ.' "

"Then said they unto him, "Who art thou then?" "

"He said, 'I am the Voice . . . ' "

That the Baptist shared the general ideas of the Messianic kingdom is clear, at a later stage, from the doubts which arose in his mind after Herod had cast him into prison, and he was hearing reports of what Jesus was doing. "Art thou He that should come," he asked, "or look we for another ?" That John also shared with Jesus the belief that the Romans were not the only enemies to be destroyed in the nation is clearly brought out by Matthew, who tells us that :

"When He saw many of the Pharisees and Scribes come to His baptism He said unto them, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance' " (Matt. iii, 7-12).

Into such an atmosphere of preparation, then, came Jesus of Nazareth, the "meek and mild, pale Galilean, who had laboured for years in a village carpenter's shop," if you will accept the popular modern idea of Him. Standing alone against all the might of Imperial Rome is the "pacific, gentle, loving teacher" who "shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets."

Somehow the conception does not seem to fit the requirements of the case ; and we fail, because of it, to realise how really great was the force of Jesus

Christ in the purposes of God, and how strong His attitude and method in dealing with the situation. The Gospels leave us at least in no doubt about that.

It has not been sufficiently realised that, as a matter of historic fact, Jesus of Nazareth actually held in His own hands the "Balance of Power" of the ancient world in His day, for it was not merely the tiny section of "the Jews," in Palestine that He might have called to His banner and led in insurrection against Rome. All around the borders of the Roman Empire, on her landward side as well as on the coast-lands, there were the "Twelve Tribes Scattered Abroad"; peoples whom Rome had not been able to conquer; "lost sheep of the House of Israel"; the Dispersed, of whom the prophets in the Old Testament, and the Apostles in the New, spoke; settled in the mountain fastnesses of Europe, developing national unities; restless, migratory, invincible, a constant menace to the security of Rome. Had Jesus sent out a message to them, and at the same time Himself led a popular movement in Palestine, He might have changed the whole face of the history of the world, a new Caesar, an ancient Napoleon, climbing to power on the ruins of the great Roman Empire.

There is no doubt that Satan knew this when he offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world if Thou wilt fall down and worship me"; for Satan never offers what he cannot give. There is little doubt that Rome knew it, and at the first sign of Jesus' intentions in that direction would have moved all their forces against Him. There is equally little doubt that Annas and Caiaphas, secure in their High-Priestly office, knew it; and if Jesus had moved in the anticipated direction, would have brought the weight of

their religious influence in behind Him and done their best to sweep Him on to victory over their national enemies; thus securing for ever to themselves the position which at the moment they owed to Rome's appointment.

There is no doubt also that Jesus Himself knew it. We cannot conceive that He who was "with the Father before the foundation of the world," who was sent to "perform the oath which God had sworn to Abraham," that He would make him a great and mighty nation, was sent without that elementary knowledge of the facts which was essential to His understanding of the situation. Not so does any earthly monarch send forth his accredited representative, much less his son and heir. "If ye then being evil, know how . . . how much more your Heavenly Father . . . ?"

No, Jesus knew the situation; and more, "He knew what was in man, and needed not that any should tell Him." When, after He had fed the five thousand, the multitude would have taken Him by force and made Him King, He withdrew Himself from them, not because He was *not* the King, but because "My time is not yet." Premature action has spoiled many fine movements, and a false step makes the difference between success and failure.

Moreover, "know ye not that I can ask My Father, and immediately He will give Me twelve legions of angels ?" Think of the force that was possible, if needs must ! Think of the self-restraint, and loyalty to His Father's will and purpose, which kept Him from using that force, even when the cruel death of the Cross was staring Him in the face. "How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be ?"

Think again! What force, "twelve legions of angels." In the days when Sennacherib brought his great army against Jerusalem, we read that "it came to pass that night the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men." (2 Kings xix, 35). One angel, and 185,000 men were slain in one night; what could not be done with "twelve legions of angels"?

Let us suppose for a moment that Jesus had yielded to the temptation which Satan had launched upon Him; or let us suppose that He had given way to the popular demand and sent out His call to rouse the Jews in Palestine, after the feeding of the five thousand. Would that have happened, which *did* occur in A.D. 70, when the Jews took matters into their own hands and tried to throw off the Roman yoke? That effort resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people throughout the world. Would this have fared any better?

Suppose Jesus had called in the Tribes of the Dispersion, and they had then broken in on the Roman Empire, as at a later stage of its history they so victoriously did break in. Jesus would then have been King of a nation, the successor to Rome, whose capital would have been Jerusalem, whose borders would have been in the hands of the scattered tribes throughout Europe, and whose Home Country of Palestine would have sheltered a spirit and a party which was more contrary to the Will of God even than was Imperial Rome—as we shall see in due course. "How then could the Scriptures have been fulfilled," those Scriptures which were part and parcel of the "oath and covenant" which Jesus came to perform?

Listen: "I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime" (2 Sam. *vii*, 10).

Where was that place? Isaiah tells us that it was the isles north-west from Palestine. The scattered tribes had not, in the days of Jesus, reached the place appointed. They were not "planted"; they were still mobile, in the processes of tribal migrations; they were subject at any moment to attack from any of the "children of wickedness." Surely Jesus was right when he said, "My time is not yet . . . how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?"

No; in the providence of God, Israel had still a large portion of her period of punishment to undergo. 2,520 years had been laid upon her, of which only 750 had passed; it would need another 1,750 years before the time was fulfilled. Until her punishment was over, she would remain comparatively small, unrecognised as a great world power; after that period she would rapidly attain what the prophets had said of her. If Israel's sun had set about the period 720 B.C., then it was due to rise in the period round about A.D. 1790.

Her period of oblivion was to be one of silence, of growth, of hope and expectation; of discipline, training, and organisation, before the Kingdom should be made manifest. In the meanwhile the Heir has arrived to view the situation; has vindicated the faithfulness of God to His oath and covenant; has offered Himself to His people and been rejected by the many, though "to as many as received Him gave He power to become sons of God." Finally, by His voluntary self-giving on the Cross, He has drawn

men unto Himself as Saviour from their sins. He has yet to come and take over His great power and reign. "My time is not yet come."

We have suggested that Jesus found in Palestine bigger obstacles to the development of the purposes of God even than Imperial Rome itself. It is a fact that the Israel nation, in Palestine, in Jesus' day, suffered more from the spiritual domination of their own priests than they did from all the exactions and limitations imposed upon them by the Roman power.

In the economy of the nation Israel, it has always been laid down as a ruling principle that Church and State march together, only because in essence the government of Israel is still Theocratic, God-ruled. The temporal head of the nation (the king or his representative) and the spiritual head of the nation (the chief priest, or the archbishop, or whatever we like to call him), are jointly responsible to God for their guardianship of His nation, and so long as the two march together the Will of God is on its road to fulfilment.

It is an interesting factor of the Israel history, both in the Bible and since, that the great enemy of God's purposes, the Devil himself, has launched more attacks upon this unity of Church and State, this joint responsibility of the spiritual and temporal leaders, than upon any other part of our national polity. It was so when Jeroboam broke away from the throne of David in Rehoboam's reign, and refused to allow the Levites to minister in Israel; immediately the national life fell away into idolatry and ruin. "The sin wherewith Jeroboam caused Israel to sin" left its mark in the Bible story all the rest of the way.

It has been so whenever the king has tried to take upon himself the twofold office of temporal and spiritual power. We recall Saul offering sacrifice and being rejected accordingly; Uzziah burning incense and being struck with leprosy. All the history since has been a succession of conflicts between the temporal power and the spiritual; whenever the two have worked together there has been prosperity and security; when the enemy has succeeded in running a wedge between them there has been strife and ruin. This bids fair to be as true to-day as it ever was in our history; the gathering conflict between the episcopacy and parliament, between priestly power and kingly authority, is inspired by the great enemy of the nation, and will have its usual fruit of ill.

So it was in the days of Jesus Christ, for in the persons of the ecclesiastical dignitaries there was no desire to welcome the royal prerogatives. Their own spiritual rights were too precious, too secure, too lucrative a proposition. Annas and Caiaphas, one nominal, the other actual High Priest, were unscrupulous time-serving sycophants, secure in their ecclesiastical monopolies, backed up by the vested interests of their families; and woe betide any who interfered or raised a voice of protest.

We are told so often to-day that it is not Christian to raise the voice of criticism; that "Love wins everywhere"; that Jesus never fought or argued. Thank God, that is not true! If it had been, we tremble to think where the world would have been by this time. What of the slave trade? And opium? What about the exactions of Rome before the Reformation? Where would child labour, slums, and drink have led us by this time, if there had been

never a word of criticism, never a voice of opposition ? There would assuredly have been no Church of Christ, no Cross of Salvation, nothing but the blackest of black night everywhere, had not criticism and courage and strength and conflict carried the liberties and the life of men victoriously over all enemies.

One wonders in what way the proponents of such views ever read their Bibles, or if they ever read them at all ; and whether we shall ever again see the day of "heroes of the faith" who will dare, not only to raise the voice of protest but even to die for their Faith. Not on this kind of sentimental pabulum are heroes bred ; not so did their Master and Teacher tread the thorny path before them.

Secular history reports, and the Bible story corroborates, that Annas was a man of extreme subtility of mind and fertility of resource, as well as of immense power in the nation through his diplomacy and his wealth. Having bought the office of High Priest (Archbishop of Canterbury, in modern terms), for himself, he served his term and then bought it for his son ; then for a second, a third and a fourth son. Having exhausted the personnel of his immediate family, he then bought it for his son-in-law Caiaphas, who held the office in Jesus' day. But whether it was son number 1, 2, 3, or 4, or son-in-law Caiaphas, who held the office, it was Annas who held the reins of power. The common people knew it—what do they not know of the lives of the great ?—and coupled his name always with that of the reigning High Priest ; for whoever was nominally in that position, they had known Annas as actual High Priest for almost as long as man could remember.

Annas, we are told, had a country residence out on

the slopes of Olivet. It was popularly known as "The Booths of Annas," because it was built and kept up from the revenues which Annas made from the market-place which he had established in the Temple Courts, the "Booths of Annas."

If anyone had to sacrifice in the Temple, they had first to buy specially selected animals, oxen or sheep ; and it was very convenient and fitting that the cattle should be selected by the High Priest—who better ?—and sold by the High Priest—who more fitting ?—in the Temple Courts—where more convenient ?—and at the High Priest's price—and why not ? "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest" has been the first principle of commerce for a very long time now ; and if you can add to it a comfortable monopoly, based on the fact that you are God's High Priest and none can interfere, well, again, why not ? "All's fair in love and—business."

If anyone wished to put money into the Temple Treasury (the collection box, in fact), or if you went to pay your tithe, you could not pay it in coin of the realm, because that had Cæsar's image on it and was therefore unlawful. You had to pay your dues in Temple currency, at a fixed rate of exchange. And who should fix the rate of exchange but Annas ? Well, and why not ? Some huge fortunes have been built up by very good Christians on nothing else than the manipulated ebb and flow of the "rate of exchange."

If you were too poor for a bigger offering, you could always offer in the Temple two pigeons or a turtle-dove. God cared for His poorer children and provided for their needs and extremities in the scheme of worship. So also did Annas ; he was always ready to

help. Since he could not rear doves or pigeons in the confines of the city, because it was against the law, he kept a wonderful "columbarium," or dove-rearing establishment, out at the "Booths"; consequently it was easy to buy the right kind of dove or pigeon in the Temple courts, and at the right price, Annas' price.

Imagine yourself, if you will, an inhabitant of Jerusalem; on the one hand, governed by Rome, which you hate; on the other hand dominated by Annas and his henchman Caiaphas, who ought at least to be able to help you spiritually, but who, in the words of Jesus, "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." What would you have done, or said? If you had loved your country, nay, more, if you had loved God's house, and Him who owns God's house, what would have been your attitude?

Now, there are three points of view, each of which receives a good deal of attention in these days. We may, for convenience only, call them—

1. *The "Christian" Attitude, so-called.*

"Follow after peace with all men." "Nothing is accomplished by opposition; Love conquers all."

2. *The Fatalistic Attitude.*

"Leave it alone, it will all come right." "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." "It is no use bothering; nothing we can say or do will alter it." "It is God's will; He will deal with it in His own good time."

3. *The Confessedly Materialistic Attitude.*

"I cannot afford to offend the powers that be." "Yes, I know it is wrong, but I do not like to say anything."

We shall all frankly agree that there is something wrong about all these attitudes, a weakness, a surrender, which is not quite worthy but which is very common. We are all inclined more for peace than for conflict, more to let things slide than to lead the attack on abuses which we know to exist. And, again quite frankly, we shall do well to suspect in ourselves those attitudes which let us off more easily and which enable us to avoid discomfort or peril for ourselves.

What was Jesus' attitude ? It is expressed in very simple terms.

"When He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the Temple . . . and said unto them, 'Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise' "; which reminded His disciples of the phrase in Psalm lxix, 9, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John ii, 13-17).

Think of the moral courage of that act, its heroism, the "leadership" in it. There is nothing of yielding, weakness, or fear, in this ; but a definite challenge to God's High Priest on the ground of the way he made his money. Jesus attacked Annas in his weakest spot, the pocket (always a dangerous thing to do) ; and in so doing He dragged out into the cold light of day abuses about which the general public only dared to whisper or to jest.

In the story of the Second Cleansing of the Temple, as recorded by the other three Evangelists (Matt. xxi ;

Mark xi; Luke xix) Jesus expresses Himself in even stronger terms. "My house," He says, quoting Isaiah lvi, 7 and Jer. vii, 11, "shall be called a House of Prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers."

That Jesus definitely attacked the money-making methods of the High Priest is evident from the fact that on any other ground Annas, knowing the law as well as Jesus did, could have quoted definite instructions which would cover him in the act of keeping oxen, sheep and doves in so convenient a place as the Temple Court.

*Deut. xiv*, 24-26. "And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose to place His name there . . . the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks . . . and if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it . . . then shalt thou turn it into money . . . and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose . . . and thou shalt bestow that money for . . . oxen or for sheep."

Annas was too clever a man not to have Scripture warrant for his actions, but he would have been in danger of what we may call "scrap-text" quoting. By this is meant that, while almost any line of action can be justified by occasional quotations carefully selected to suit the subject ("The Devil can quote Scripture for his purpose"), the only safe and correct way is to support any line of action by the *whole body of Scripture teaching*, and not just by such as suits the immediate purpose that is in view.

Jesus had to remind the religious teachers of His day very often that they were in danger of "scrap-text quoting"; for example, He says, "Ye tithe . . . but ye forget the weightier matters of the law"; in

other words, "You are able to quote about tithing; why not quote also about Justice, Mercy, and Truth?" Annas might have quoted about his right to sell oxen and sheep, but would he care, or dare, to quote about "Woe to them that add house to house...?" He had no Scripture warrant for his rack-renting, for his exorbitant prices, for his taking advantage of the necessities of the poor—and their *spiritual* necessities at that—in order to fill the family coffers.

When Jesus comes again, one wonders what He will say to the modern examples of the art of Annas, who make life so hard for the majority in their anxiety to make themselves comfortable? Before those searching eyes and that righteous mind, not even the dignity of Annas' ecclesiastical position and appearance can hide the fact that in essence he was a "thief"; and that his thieving was carried on even in the House of God and with the authority which his exalted spiritual rank gave him.

Neither social rank, nor specious argument, nor outward profession can cloak our offences, "for all things lie naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Can we be surprised, therefore, that in speaking of the Second Coming of our Lord, John, the "Apostle of Love," declares that men shall begin to "say unto the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from *the wrath of the Lamb;* for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

The "Wrath of the Lamb"! What a phrase! We could understand "the wrath of a Lion." It is the lion's nature to roar and to bite and to tear; nor, though it be very terrible, does it surprise us. In

fact, the more the lion roars, the more we get used to it, and the less notice we take of it. But—*a Lamb*? How great must be the sin which can rouse the quiet, placid, uncomplaining Lamb to the pitch of "wrath"? And how shall such men as Annas escape that terrible indignation, that searching examination?

One does not wonder that Annas began to set in motion those secret resources of power which, humanly speaking, in the end were to bring Jesus to the Cross. He could not afford, as we cannot afford, to have Conscience animate in human form, dressed and vocal and walking about on the plain level of human life for all men to see and hear. There are personal matters which are no one's concern but our own, and if Jesus persists in dragging these intimacies of our characters out into the open, then the only thing to do with Him is to get rid of Him at all costs. At least then our pockets will be safe; we shall not have to answer that searching query, "How did you make your money?"

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### "THE CHALLENGE OF THE KING"

### (*b*) *The Philosophy of Annas*

WHILE the ecclesiastical authorities of Jesus' day were keeping the people down by reason of an economic strangle-hold in religious matters, and taking great care of their own temporal interests, they were at the same time equally enslaving the minds of the public by a false philosophy which, for themselves and men of their kind, was exceedingly comfortable. For Annas and Caiaphas were "Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection." "When a man is dead, he is dead." An easy doctrine; "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

A people is in a parlous condition when those who are regarded as its spiritual leaders have no message to deliver, or when the message they do deliver is a false one. It is, of course, a particular care of the Evil One that the official pronouncement of the Word of God should, if possible, be poisoned at its source. He would far rather have a message falsely delivered, with all the authority of so-called scholarship behind it, than have no message; and with his ancient "higher critical" position expressed in the words, "Yea, hath God said . . ? But God doth know . . . " he has succeeded in putting into the mouths of spiritual leaders in all ages, and in none more than in our own, statements which have the weight of scholastic sanction without the authority of the Word of God behind them.

So it transpires, as in the case of Annas and Caia-

phas, that the very men to whom the populace look for Truth lead their followers away from the word of God until whole communities are floundering in the morass of intellectual doubts, starving for the spiritual food which their leaders are unable to give them, and left to face the trials and difficulties of practical life without any sure ground under their feet. Well might Jesus say of such men, "They be blind leaders of the blind ; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. xv, 14).

This is one of those vivid illustrations which Jesus drew from the life which teemed round His hearers, which, if it were not so pathetic, has its quiet sense of humour beneath the surface. Everyone in the East is accustomed to seeing the blind beggar, led along the street by a small boy or an older companion ; verminous often and filthy, vociferous always ; either with bell, or clapper, or raucous voice at one and the same time clearing the way before him and demanding alms from the more fortunate.

Jesus sees the people of His time in similar case, having to be led by the hand, their only appointed leaders, Annas and Caiaphas, being as blind and helpless as the people they lead. Inevitably, destruction lies ahead for the people whose leaders are not true prophets. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Annas and Caiaphas were not the only examples in the Israel history of men in a high position being unworthy of their responsibilities. Both before and since, the type is only too common, and it meets with the same challenge in all generations from Jesus who is the Truth.

The prophet Ezekiel, for example, spares no words

in his description of the religious and national leaders of his day, a description that well applies to more modern times than his.

"Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost . . . and they were scattered because there was no shepherd . . . Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord . . . Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth . . . ' " (Ezek. xxxiv, 1-10).

It is, we know, easy to criticise; there are some who tell us that it is a sin to criticise. Was Ezekiel wrong to express the Word of the Lord against those who failed to carry out their responsibilities? Was Jesus wrong when He said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites . . . "? Or was He wrong to challenge the false thinking of Annas, because Annas happened to be Head of the Church? Would it not be more wrong to sit still and refuse to fight for the Truth of God, even if it means opposing those who ought to be standing for that Truth? Is there not some word of God with regard to the Watchmen of Israel?

"If the watchman see the sword come and blow

not the trumpet and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them . . . his blood will I require at the watchman's hand . . . nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked from his way to turn from it . . . thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. xxxiii).

In His challenge to the false philosophy of Annas and Caiaphas, Jesus takes a very practical line, the first illustration of which we may find in the illness and death of the little daughter of Jairus. "And when He came to the house, all were weeping and bewailing her ; but He said, 'Weep not, for she is not dead, but sleepeth.' And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. But He, taking her by theh and, called her, saying, 'Maiden, arise.' And her spirit returned and she arose up immediately ; and her parents were amazed . . . " (Luke viii, 49-55).

One wonders what the Medical Association of the day said to that ? After laughing Him to scorn, knowing she was dead, would it be possible to turn round and say, "We were mistaken in our diagnosis, the maiden was not dead, but asleep" ? More wonderful *voltes-face* have been known in history even than that ; though Luke, whose version of the story we have quoted, was a medical man ; and he carefully reports that "her spirit returned."

Such was the first part of the answer of Jesus to the cynical philosophy of Annas, "When a man is dead, he is dead." Oh, but, you may say, that is not conclusive. Jesus Himself said she was asleep ; there have been many cases of this kind on record ; this proves nothing. Besides, it is suspicious that there were so few witnesses, and only those who had an interest in telling this strange story. Luke himself,

although he was a medical man, was still a prejudiced reporter, and not an eye-witness at that.

Very well, then ; let us quote a stronger case, which probably happened some little time before this.

"Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother and she was a widow . . . and when the Lord saw her . . . he came and touched the bier . . . and He said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise' ; and he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother."

Now here is a case in which surely there can be no doubt that the young man was actually dead. Special mention is made of the fact that there was a large company of independent witnesses both to the fact that he was dead and being carried out to burial, and also that Jesus stopped the funeral and restored the young man to his mother alive and well. What have Annas and Caiaphas to say to that ?

"Catalepsy ! How fortunate that Jesus should arrive on the scene in the nick of time and, perceiving the actual state of affairs, should preserve the youth from that most horrible fate of being buried alive. No ; in dealing with so soundly based a philosophy as that of Annas and Caiaphas, we require more than ordinary cases of this kind. We want something quite definite, from which there is no escape."

How well Jesus knew human nature, when He said, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rise from the dead."

However, if a more definite case is needed, what about Lazarus ?

"Oh, but you cannot quote the story of Lazarus," we are told. "There is serious doubt as to the

authenticity of that story. It seems to be a later addition to the Gospel, and has no connection with the rest of the Gospel tradition. It really should not be included."

Let us examine the story first, and see if it "fits in." We have rather a large amount of detail in connection with it (John x, 40—xii, 19).

Jesus, it seems, had gone away to the quiet country regions beyond Jordan, needing rest and an escape from the enmity of the Jews. Only recently had been the great controversy concerning the man born blind, whom Jesus had restored to sight (John ix). The Feast of Dedication which followed had been marked by a determined effort to stone Jesus for blasphemy, because He called Himself the Son of God (John x, 31). Out of that excitement Jesus passed into a period of much-needed holiday, during which He received the news that His great friend Lazarus, up in Bethany, two miles out of Jerusalem, was seriously ill (John xi, 3).

Here, then, Jesus sees the opportunity of settling for ever this question of Resurrection, and of fighting Annas and Caipahas on their own ground. "This sickness," He said, "is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (John xi, 4).

"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When He heard *therefore* that he was sick, He abode two days still in the place where He was."

Has this not always seemed a peculiar statement? If He loved the family and knew that Lazarus was so ill that they had sent a messenger, on foot and through the dangerous mountain solitudes all the way down

to Jordan and beyond, to find Jesus and tell Him of the sickness, should we not imagine that Jesus' first act would have been to set off at once, to be with them in their anxiety and to comfort them in their distress ? With his healing power, a word from Him, even without His moving from where He was, could have cured His beloved friend and eased the minds of the sisters. "Now Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus ; He abode *therefore* where He was . . . "

As a result of that seemingly cruel and unnecessary delay, the sisters had the agony of seeing their brother die ; they went through the awful period of burying him and returning to the empty house. Although they were surrounded by friends, there was the consciousness underneath it all that Jesus, whom they loved and trusted more than anyone else, had failed them. The messenger was safely back, having seen Jesus and delivered the message which should fetch Him ; but He did not come. One day, two days, the third and the fourth ; but no Jesus ; so that, when He did arrive on the day following, they both of them in the depth of their grief reproached Him, separately and independently, for His delay. "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

What does it all mean ? Simply that "This sickness is not unto death, but that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." There are evidently things more important than death ; there are issues so grave as to outbalance the suffering which Martha and Mary underwent, as it seemed to them, so unnecessarily. How much, after all, do we know of the necessary purposes of God when we complain of our human sufferings ? How often is He not working out larger matters so that even the pains and sorrows, which to

us loom so large and are so hard to bear, sink into insignificance ?

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

"Martha, Mary, if your brother had not died, you would not have believed in Me as the Resurrection and the Life. If Lazarus had been saved before his burial there would have been no decisive answer to the teaching of Annas and Caiaphas which is poisoning the whole national life. There could have been no public manifestation of my Kingship. It was actually *because* I love you and Lazarus and the people, *my* people, that I stayed where I was two days longer. Had I loved you *less*, I might have come more rapidly. You must know all the facts before you can judge the values of the issues at stake."

We shall never know how much it cost Jesus to delay, to let His friend Lazarus die and be buried. John gives us pathetic glimpses of His state of mind. We read, for instance, that Jesus arrived and found a large company of Jews from Jerusalem who had come to mourn with Martha and Mary ; for Bethany was only a country suburb of the city, and Lazarus was a well-known citizen. "When Jesus therefore saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" (verse 33.)

"And, He said, 'Where have ye laid him ?' They said unto Him, 'Lord, come and see.' "

It is an interesting example of the futility of some of the critics that they seize on this simple statement, in which Jesus asks to be led to the grave, as an example, forsooth, of the 'Limitation of Jesus' mind.'

"If it were true," they say, "that Jesus knew all things, it would not have been necessary for Him to ask this question. Here we have distinct evidence that He lived an ordinary human life with all the limitations of the human mind, in that He did not know, and had to ask, a fact which so intimately concerned Himself and His friend Lazarus."

Quite apart from the fact that this question does not require such an interpretation, it would be well if some of the critics would learn how to weigh evidence. In the face of definite statements, even in this story, of Jesus' knowledge which surpassed the human —for instance, "this sickness is not unto death. . . . " —"Thy brother shall rise again,"—in face of the fact of Jesus' knowledge of Nathanael, and Zacchæus, of Peter's approaching denial and Judas' intended treachery, as well as innumerable other cases, the weight of evidence is all in favour of the Scripture statement that "Jesus knew all things and needed not that any should tell Him." Such strained quibbling as this is either sheer ignorance of the statements of Scripture or deliberate determination not to accept Jesus as in any way different from ourselves.

That same love and sympathy with the suffering, which must however let the purposes of God go on, is manifest yet again in the attitude of Jesus. In verse 35 we read,

"Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, 'Behold, how He loved him.' And some of them said, 'Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died ?' "

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him
for His grace,

Behind a frowning Providence He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour;

The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err And scan His works in vain;

God is His own interpreter And He will make it plain."

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

"Thy brother shall rise again . . . I am the Resurrection and the Life."

"Jesus therefore groaning in Himself cometh to the grave."

"Jesus said, 'Take ye away the stone.' Martha . . . saith unto Him, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been in the grave four days.' "

This has always seemed to be a strange and unnecessary detail to have included in the dignity of the Gospel story; but viewed in the light of the larger issue at stake it was essential. In the case of the little girl, the daughter of Jairus, the subject was only just dead; in fact, there might be a doubt as to whether she were actually dead when Jesus called her back. In the case of the young man at Nain, it is true that he was being carried out to burial; but it *might* have been a case of catalepsy. When once, however, a decomposition has set in, as here, even medical science must be silent and belief must give way to certainty; as it did with the multitudes,

though not with Annas and Caiaphas. "Neither will *they* believe, if one rise from the dead."

"Lazarus, come forth !"

It is the voice of Authority, the Voice of the King ; the Voice that challenges, defeats, and should silence the false philosophies of men for ever. Here on the very doorstep of Annas, Jesus produced evidence which they could not refute. Lazarus was dead, buried, decomposed. Jesus restores him, alive and well, in the sight of all the people.

"Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God ?"

Naturally the effect of the raising of Lazarus was immense upon the multitudes.

"Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done" (John xi, 45).

"Much people of the Jews therefore knew that Jesus was in Bethany, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead" (John xii, 9).

"The people therefore that were with Him when He raised Lazarus out of his grave and raised him from the dead bare record. For this cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had done this miracle" (John xii, 19).

"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ? behold, the world has gone after Him.' "

The position, so far as Annas was concerned, was

extremely dangerous. It was only recently that the Jews had tried to stone Jesus; but the raising of Lazarus in so startling and public a fashion had swung public opinion right round so that His enemies were at their wits' end. We read that a council was immediately called to deal with the situation, and with the details of this council we shall deal presently. The method of procedure against Jesus was there decided upon, and it was also agreed that Lazarus should be put to death, "because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus" (John xii, 10, 11).

The philosophy of Annas and Caiaphas has been proved to be a lie; there remains only therefore violence, the last resort of defeated and disappointed men.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### "THE CHALLENGE OF THE KING"

### (c) *The Position of Annas*

It is evident that the story of the raising of Lazarus has an essential place in the Gospel story as leading to an understanding of the situation now developing in Jerusalem. The story moves towards the end of our Lord's ministry and of the long conflict between Himself and His great adversary the Devil.

That Lazarus should be raised from the dead so effectively as to admit of no reply, and so publicly as not to allow the facts to be either explained away or hushed up, has put an entirely different complexion on the state of affairs. For a long time Annas and Caiaphas had seemed to be winning the conflict. By a constant supervision by their spies they were kept fully aware of all that Jesus said and did ; and by suggesting to the crowd that He was a blasphemer and possessed of a devil, they had brought matters to a climax at the recent Feast of Dedication, when the latest and most determined effort to stone Him had taken place (John x, 31).

That Jesus knew full well whose was the real mind behind all the opposition that was organised against Him is evident from the incident in Luke xiii, 32. "The same day came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto Him, 'Get thee out, and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee.' "

They did not say this because they were anxious for Jesus' safety ; it happened to be more convenient

for their schemes that He should not remain in Herod's territory, where He then was, but should be brought back under the more immediate eye of Annas. Jesus' reply to them shows that He realised what was in their minds. "Go ye and tell that fox," He said,—not the fox Herod, for they had nothing to do with Herod ; they had neither been sent by him, nor were they returning to him ; nor was the title "fox" indicative of Herod's character ; "Go ye and tell that fox"—the crafty Annas, who sent you—"I do cures to-day and to-morrow and the third day I am perfected." In other words, "I move only when my time comes, and not at his dictation." "Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following ; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." In short, "When my time comes, the fox shall see me where he wants me."

With the spectacular raising of Lazarus and the consequent swing round of public opinion in favour of Jesus, immediate action on the part of Annas and Caiaphas was imperative. "What are we going to do ?" they were being asked by their followers ; "For this man is doing many miracles. If we leave Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him ; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

That, of course, was the crux of the situation. Suppose there were to be a strong move on the part of the populace in the direction of Jesus, so pronounced that the Romans had to take notice of it, the immediate question which Rome would ask would be, "What is the High Priest doing ? Why does he allow this kind of thing ? If he is not able to control his co-religionists, we must supersede him and place someone in charge who can exercise more authority."

It had, in short, become a question of life and death for Annas and Caiaphas ; either Jesus or themselves must give way. Thus, He who had attacked them in pocket and in philosophy, and driven them in each case headlong from the field, now came to challenge their very existence. They must take steps against Him, and that speedily ; though with greatest care, for fear of a popular uprising.

In the council which was thereupon called, Caiaphas (inspired, doubtless, in the background by the subtle mind of his father-in-law Annas), was faced with a difficult situation ; for he had not a united body of opinion to deal with even there. There were on the one hand his own supporters, on whom he could rely through thick and thin ; on the other hand was a party represented by Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and a large body of the priests who believed in Jesus. Between these two sections of the council there were the neutrals, ready to add the body of their opinion to whichever side the process of events seemed to be justifying. At the moment the recent raising of Lazarus and the consequent excitement of the people would tend to swing them towards Jesus rather than towards Caiaphas.

Such then was the situation as the council gathered. The matter was urgent, for in a few days' time would be the Feast of the Passover, and if anything effective was going to be done with Jesus, that was the best time, as we shall see when we come to unfold the plan which Annas inspired and which Caiaphas laid before the council.

There was, of course, no longer any question in the minds of Annas and Caiaphas that Jesus must be got rid of at all costs ; but they had to take account

of the waverers in the council as well as of the opposing force that sympathised with Jesus and were half convinced that He was the Messiah. Whatever method of attack on Jesus was put forward by Caiaphas must be reasonable enough to satisfy the doubters and strong enough to silence for ever those who already believed in Him. We may be sure that Annas spent many hours of careful thought on the solving of this difficult problem.

Meanwhile, while the schemes of Annas and Caiaphas were coming to full fruition, the multitudes began to pour into the city for the Preparation of the Feast of the Passover. Jesus was away in the country districts; already notices had been posted offering a reward for information that would lead to His arrest; the great question in all minds was "Will He come up to Jerusalem for the Feast?"

*John xi*, 54-57. "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand; and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

"Then sought they for Jesus and spake among themselves as they stood in the Temple, 'What think ye, that He will not come to the Feast?'

"Now both the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He were, he should shew it, that they might take Him."

So we come to the Preparation of the Passover. For days a long stream of travellers had been setting into the city for the Feast; for days every lip had asked, "Will Jesus be there?" For days notice

had been posted desiring information as to His whereabouts. And then, six days before the Passover, it was reported that He was in Bethany, only two miles out of the city, at the house of Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead.

One cannot help wondering how many informers rushed to Caiaphas with the news of Jesus' appearance so near to the city. We know that there was no secrecy concerning His movements; we also know that the Chief Priests took no action to arrest Him, although they had posted their notices. Why the delay? Why not act on the first information they received? Why not get Jesus safely out of the way before He could get a chance to come up to the Feast and before popular excitement increased to bursting point? These questions can only be answered as we come in the next chapter to examine the scheme which Annas had worked out and which Caiaphas had already laid before His council.

And now a new development occurred. Jerusalem ceased for the time being to be the centre of interest and Bethany took its place in the popular imagination, Bethany, where Jesus was reported to be, Bethany where Lazarus lived, that same Lazarus who had been dead and buried, and who was now very much alive. Can we be surprised to read that, when it was reported that Jesus had come up as far as Bethany, "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there; and they came (to Bethany, and from Jerusalem) not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead."

The tide had turned away from Annas and Caiaphas, away from the Preparation for the Feast, and

away from the city itself. It set steadily towards Bethany, Lazarus and Jesus. Forgetful of the Passover Preparation, and all the excitements of the city at such a busy time, the crowds made their way out of Jerusalem, across the valley and up round the slopes of Olivet, where they disappeared behind the bend in the road which hides Bethany from Jerusalem; and Annas and Caiaphas had to watch them go, whilst they themselves lay in wait for Jesus in the city, wondering whether He would dare to come right into their own citadel, and whether they might not also put Lazarus to death, "because that by reason of him many of the Jews believed on Jesus."

Next came the rumour that Jesus *was* coming to the Feast, and at that the excitement rose still higher. The crowds that thronged out of the city towards Bethany grew more dense; the eyes that watched the spur of Olivet, for the first signs of movement from the village, grew more intent. The tide set steadily Bethany-wards; it moved slowly and ever more slowly in the stream of people, down the valley, up the hillside opposite and round the spur of the hill.

Then the watchers on the city walls saw the steady flow of sightseers hesitate, waver, halt; suddenly, then, it turned on itself and surged forcefully back towards the city.

Now with cries and shouts of rejoicing, and the waving of palm leaves, Jesus of Nazareth rode straight into the presence of the Chief Priests, right into their entrenched positions of official strength and dignity.

How did He come? No "pale Galilean" here, no negligible quantity; for the keen set eyes of Annas

and Caiaphas saw, as soon as He turned that distant corner on the hillside, that this Jesus was challenging their last outposts. Immediately their minds leapt to the statement made by the prophet Zechariah (ix, 9), in the words "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE; he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

He came, then, challenging them to the last great issue; riding the royal animal of victory, the white ass of the Conqueror who has already triumphed over his enemies. Hide your heads, ye chief priests; save what ye can from the ruins of your life; while the cry of the multitudes whom ye so recently incited to pick up stones to stone Him has become "Hosanna; blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord."

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### "THE CRUCIFIED KING"

We have seen that the problem now before Annas and Caiaphas was to maintain their position as leaders of the religious life of the nation, and consequently their own ease and comfort. "If we leave Him thus alone, the Romans will come and take away *of us* both the place and the nation."

The question was not whether they should put Jesus to death; that was already decided upon. The problem was how best to bring His death about, in such a way as to win the varying sections of the Sanhedrin, satisfy the Roman governor, and not only pacify the crowd, but make them feel that in putting Jesus to death Annas and Caiaphas had advanced the prospects of national hegemony and deliverance from the power of Rome.

With this in view the Sanhedrin was called together and Caiaphas propounded his scheme, given in very brief words in John xi, 49-52.

*John xi*, 49-52. "And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the High Priest that same year, said unto them, 'Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.'

"And this spake he not of himself, but being High Priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

"Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death."

Such is the very brief account given by John, and in its present form of translation it seems to cast little light on what happened in the Sanhedrin which convinced that body that it must bend every effort to put Jesus to death. Let us first of all re-translate the incident, without comment, and then examine our reasons for thinking that we have reached a fuller exposition of what Caiaphas actually said.

"And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the High Priest that same year, said unto them,

" 'You have not considered all that is involved, and have not taken account of the well-known Rabbinical saying, "That one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not".'

"This he did not speak as being his own opinion, but as an inspired interpretation of Scripture and tradition which he, as High Priest speaking with the voice of Almighty God, now solemnly propounded. His exposition was that Jesus was the one intended by the prophets, and especially Isaiah (Chap. lii, liii) to act as the scapegoat for the nation and bear away their sins ; in so doing, not only saving the nation in Palestine, but bringing in that golden age of the Messiah in which all the twelve tribes scattered abroad should have a leading part."

Such an exposition would provide for Caiaphas the very weapons he needed in his conflict against Jesus, and the means whereby he should draw to himself and his schemes the whole of the Sanhedrin as well as the populace. Dealing as he was with certain who were prepared to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah of God, Caiaphas, speaking with all the authority of God's High Priest, was able to point out to them their error. "Some of *you* (the pronoun in

the Greek is in an emphatic position in the sentence) have not understood the situation, nor do you draw the logical conclusion (Greek—*logizesthe*) which comes from the statement in Midrash Bereshith Rabba 94, that 'it is better that one man die than that the community perish.' "

This Rabbinical statement was based upon the prophecies of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, especially the Chap. lii and liii of Isaiah, which no orthodox Jew has ever been able to make apply to the long-expected Messiah. It has always seemed to them that before the Messiah could come there must come this mysterious character of the Suffering Servant, who should, at the time of Passover, carry off the sins of the people. When that was accomplished, then Elijah would follow, and the Messiah, and the Golden Age of Jewish History would speedily arrive.

"This then," says Caiaphas' voice—we cannot help feeling that, while the voice was the voice of Caiaphas, the mind behind it was that subtle one of the "foxy" Annas—"this then is our great opportunity. This Jesus is not the Messiah, as some of you are inclined to think. He is rather the intended Victim who shall die to save the people. I do not say this of myself; am I not God's High Priest ? And is there any of you who will challenge my authority to expound the Scriptures under the direct authority of the spirit of God ?'

"Let us watch the development of the prophecies with regard to this man. Let the trend of events prove the correctness of my statement. Those of you who are wavering, wait and see that God's High Priest makes no mistake. Those of you who favour

this Jesus, stand still and see what happens. You can always act when the time comes, and I am proved correct.'

"That this is in accord with Scripture will be patent to all of you.

1. A 'lamb' is part of the Passover Service of Propitiation.
2. Prophecy continually indicates a human being as the 'lamb.'
3. Did not John the Baptist say of this man 'Behold, the Lamb of God.'
4. The time has arrived for the fulfilment of the prophecy.
5. The name 'Jesus—Saviour' points to him as the Victim.
6. His self-chosen title 'Son of God' also points to it.

"Therefore, as your High Priest, I tell you this Jesus of Nazareth is the destined Victim of prophecy. He is actuated by the devil and is being driven on by Satanic agency to death. Messiah is everywhere expected, and Jesus is the Victim to appease God's wrath before Messiah can come. Once get rid of the Victim, and Elijah will follow, and the Golden Age; and we—we of the Sanhedrin—will be the instruments of God's providence. When we have once made the people see that, they will all be with us; there will no longer be danger of the Romans taking away from us our privileged position and the nation which has been delivered to us."

It was a specious clever argument, based as it was, first on the traditions of the Rabbis and secondly on the prophecies of the Suffering Servant.

"You will see," Caiaphas would continue, "how prophecy will be fulfilled. According to the prophets this 'Suffering One' will be—

1. Betrayed by one of his friends (Psalm 41).
2. Delivered into wicked, that is Gentile, hands (Isaiah 53).
3. They will condemn and beat him.
4. Will give him vinegar to drink.
5. Will pierce his hands and feet.
6. Will give him a lingering death."

In order to the fulfilment of most of these prophecies it was only necessary that Caiaphas, or Annas, should procure the interest of Pilate to take over the prisoner and crucify him. What arguments they used to bring this about we shall probably never know, but the fact that Pilate was prepared to receive Jesus is evidenced by the fact that he was "early" on the judgment seat, and that his wife also knew of Jesus and had on the previous night "suffered many things in a dream because of him." The fact remains that, whatever arguments *were* used, Caiaphas achieved his object, and with the delivery of Jesus to Pilate, the rest of the prophecies could swing on to their natural result.

Whatever might be the private opinions of those members of the Sanhedrin who were inclined to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the clever statement of Caiaphas effectually silenced them. It was not only that Caiaphas spoke with the authority of God; as High Priest he alone had the right to "prophesy," that is, to interpret: but it was also that he gave them the chance to wait and see if his view was correct. Let any one of the prophecies be fulfilled, and his case was proved beyond dispute.

Thus "from that time forth they took counsel together to put him to death"; which means not only that they decided to slay him, for that had been previously done, but that they "put their heads together" to bring about his death in accordance with Caiaphas' interpretation.

We have seen that the delivery of Jesus to the Gentiles would achieve much for Caiaphas and his point of view; and it was comparatively easy to bring about; but there was a preliminary which must first be reached, and that was that Jesus must be betrayed by one of his own familiar friends. This may explain why, after they had "given notice that if any man knew where he was he should declare it," they took no action to arrest Jesus, until Judas turned traitor.

The Scriptures actually state that there were numbers of Jews who reported to Caiaphas that Jesus was at Bethany at the house of Lazarus; but their reports did not square with the prophecy, and Caiaphas was waiting for that. It is an interesting speculation as to whether he took any steps to persuade any of the disciples to betray Jesus. Judging from the urgency of the case, for the Passover was close at hand, and from what we know of his enmity against Jesus, and also from the subtility of the mind of Annas that was behind him, it is more than likely that such would be his line of action. If so, he may have made the suggestion to John, whom he knew personally, and thus may John have derived his knowledge of the plan which Caiaphas had laid before the Sanhedrin.

Putting all theories on one side, we know that, when *Judas* appeared "they were glad" (the Greek

uses a very strong word, implying "great joy") "and covenanted to give him money." There was no need for this "great joy," since there were so many ready to tell them where Jesus was, and since they knew it themselves so well; unless it be indeed true that this action of Judas was the one thing they were waiting for, before the whole process of punishment could be set in motion.

Can we not see the news hastening to Caiaphas and Annas, "Judas, one of the Twelve, has betrayed Jesus"? "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, even he that eateth bread with me in the house, the same hath lifted up his heel against me." The same suggestion is made by Jesus Himself; when asked who it was who should betray him, he says, "he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish"; and deliberately he hands the piece of bread from his own hand to Judas. "And after the sop, Satan entered into him."

What more could the Sanhedrin want to prove that Caiaphas' interpretation was correct? And as the news reached one after another of the members of the Council, how great would be the rejoicing in Caiaphas' party, the strengthening of the waverers and the unwilling conviction of the supporters of Jesus.

Other confirmations of prophecy were easy to accomplish.

"How much shall we give Judas by way of reward?" It needs only the mind of an Annas to suggest "Give him thirty pieces of silver." Why thirty? Why not twenty-five? Or forty?

*Zech. xi*, 12. "So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver."

Prophecy is being fulfilled all along the line.

Further we are told that Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, was overcome with remorse, and "cast down the pieces of silver in the Sanctuary, and departed."

Can we not see Judas hurrying to the priests to offer them the money back again? The priests refused to receive it; Judas followed them higher and higher into the Temple precincts until they took refuge in the Sanctuary itself, where his feet might not follow them. Then he cast the money into the very sanctuary and departed. Again prophecy is "fulfilled":

*Zech. xi*, 13. "And I took the pieces of silver and cast them . . . into the House of the Lord."

The question then was "what to do with this silver"?

"And the chief priests (Annas and Caiaphas) took the pieces of silver and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the Treasury, since it is the price of blood'; and they took counsel (put their heads together) and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in" (Matt. xxvii, 6).

Why the "potter's field"? Prophecy again! "And the Lord said unto me, 'Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was priced at of them.'"

At the moment we have gone far enough to show that Annas and Caiaphas would stop short at nothing to achieve their end; that the cleverest wits of the generation were levelled at Jesus Christ; and that, to all human points of view, they had succeeded in answering the last challenge of Jesus when they handed him over to the Roman power. From that

time on, there could be no doubt of the end. Every detail of the prophecies could then be assured.

Yet they had not entirely reckoned with Pilate's attitude to this great personality who was thus thrust into his hands, and the study of the clash of spiritual power against temporal power is of fascinating interest. The swing of the pendulum to and fro, for and against Jesus, in the mind of Pilate, provides room for much longer discussion than is our purpose now; but it led Pilate at last to the conviction that, whatever else He was, this Man was more than Pilate could account for. So at length he brought Him forth and "saith unto the Jews, 'Behold, your King.'

"But they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him.'

"Pilate saith unto them, 'Shall I crucify your King?'

"The Chief Priests answered, 'We have no king but Cæsar.'"

A truer word Annas and Caiaphas never uttered, though they were High Priests of Almighty God. Long ago had they flung off the restraints of righteousness and truth, of justice and mercy; long ago they had ceased to serve Him whose uniform they wore and whose representatives they professed to be. Only Cæsar remained to them, as Lord and Master; only Cæsar, and that Greater One behind him to whom they had sold themselves. Cæsar, the Head of Imperial Rome, was Satan's representative on earth.

"Shall I crucify your King?"

What else can we do? We cannot keep Jesus waiting on the doormat of our indecision, nor can we relegate Him to the attic of unused properties. It is

either all or nothing with Him; He is either the Centre and Soul of our life, or its Judge and Executioner. We are either His subjects, or His rebels; we must either crown Him or crucify.

So they crucified Him; buried Him; rolled a stone to keep Him in; sealed the grave and set a watch; went home and said, "That is the end."

And three days later. . . . ?

"He is not here; He is RISEN . . . "

What can we do with a king like this?

We may postpone our decision with regard to Him; we may decide to live without Him; we may, like Annas and Caiaphas, conquer His challenge by turning away.

"We will not have this man to reign over us."
"Not this man, but Barabbas."
"Crucify Him, Crucify Him."
"We have no king but Cæsar."

BUT—

We cannot get rid of Jesus; stones, seals and a watch; unbelief, opposition and denial; when we have done all, and said all, and thought all,

JESUS REMAINS, VICTOR, SAVIOUR, KING.

AND IN THE ULTIMATE, WHAT THEN?

"Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him; and they also that pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

"And I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself.

"And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.

"And the armies that were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written—

"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

"And the Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'; and let him that heareth say 'Come'; and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"He which testifieth these things saith, 'Surely I come quickly.'

"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## "THE INSISTENT KING"

## "WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST?"

# SEVEN TIMES

*By*

MAJOR H. W. WADGE, M.C., B.A., M.D.

7

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THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
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